THE POETRY REVIEW

Volume 30
1939

The Poetry Society
London

Kraus Reprint
Nendeln, Liechtenstein
1969

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KRAUS REPRINT
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KRAUS-THOMSON ORGANIZATION LIMITED
Nendeln/Liechtenstein
1969
Printed in Germany
Lessingdruckerei Wiesbaden

MEN OF THE WORLD, MID HUM AND STIR, RING OF ANVIL AND FRET OF LOOM,
BUILD FOR YOUR THOUGHTS A THOROUGHFARE, KEEP FOR YOUR SOULS A SILENT ROOM

THE POETRY REVIEW

First published (as *The Poetical Gazette*) May, 1909

VOLUME XXX

Note to reprint edition: volume 30, number 1 begins with page 9.

MCMXXXIX
LONDON, W.1 :
THE POETRY SOCIETY (INCORPORATED)

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MOONLIGHT

SIGH of the night breeze mild as the swish of rain
Seems to be blowing the moonlight into my room.
I lean far out from the window and wish I could float
Out on the dark of night as a bird will fly—
It remembers the ground beneath it—always below
Death lies waiting—under the cliffs of the mountain,
Under the sky, down in the depths of the sea;
But moonlight pours over the edge of the world,
Into tremendous night falling for ever.

G. E. MULLINS.

THE POETIC VALUE OF MODERNISM

IN my own experience of the appreciation of modern poetry I have always found it essential to remember that today there is no historical background. The Great War threw back poetry at least thirty years, just as the Reformation in Scotland partially erased the Dunbar-Henryson tradition and similarly in revolutionary France. To remember that washes away many sins. In a great deal of criticism there is a tendency to compare names rather than works, a tendency to favour so far as the work is concerned the fatuous belief that however excellent a poem it cannot bear honourable comparison with a "classic." It even appears that in this century we still idolize the man, forgetting that however artificial the present may seem to our aesthetic sense it is, nevertheless, an essential component of the past. Indeed, if all good poetry had come down to us anonymously we might find to our discomfort that the modernist maintains a standard favourably comparable to that set by the supernumeraries in the times of Dante, Shakespeare and Goethe. Furthermore, I believe, in a dim fashion, that despite the alleged evanescence of tradition there is still a pattern and that matters more than all great names. Ideas mean more than men, Zola once said; and in our assessment of poetic development we must approach the subject universally. By that I do not infer we should seek the universal in a writer, how can we? Too many critics misconstrue the word: when they plead for it in art they really mean unity,—the vast fabric of ideas; subtleties of emotion and imagination. I feel that analysis should be like the dress designer who, in creating a model, takes past and prevailing fashions, sifts out the essentials and, after harmonizing the colours, textual qualities and design proceeds to his own creation. But in the relation of literature to literature we must remember that conditions constantly change, and so it appears to me that a "problem" such as modernism and classicism or romanticism does not exist.

I am not suggesting for a moment that there are no

epochal differences. There are. But regnant disputes concerning theoretical problems are trivial, and, I fancy, dangerous, when placed beside the more vital ones of evocation and expression of period. Every great poet writes his time *through* himself, not *in*, and therefore it is our purpose to seek Time in that voice, trace in the imaginative and conceptual plan all the beauties, sorrows and human reactions in the scheme of things. I do not believe that there is such a voice in present-day England (at least, a dominant one). I am aware that Messrs. Day Lewis, W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender and others are attempting by an inapprehensible method to catch the spirit of the Age, but they lack intensity, expansiveness and *evocative* power. With their predilection for French poetry and what they fondly term the European school, they have acquired all the weaknesses, especially those of Baudelaire. We owe, it is true, Baudelaire a debt for his imagic and linguistic legacy, but these did not make him a poet: what did (and here I agree with Mr. T. S. Eliot) was his struggle to liberate his mind from deep-rooted infirmities, his tenacious efforts to find in evil a satisfactory spiritual belief.[1] These are points modernists forget. Baudelaire's attainment did not evolve from a system but from a struggle which is the life of every poet. Again, Goethe's dabblings in "ologies" did not widen his poetic horizon: they confused it, and they certainly did *not* strengthen his aesthetic appreciation. To me it is strange and unwholesome that the present school should follow theoretical experiments of the squib and rocket type, when it is obvious that any system of ideas which demands the sacrifice of experience or a part of it or preoccupies the mind to the detriment of the message is trivial and can have no claim to serious consideration.

The world abounds in theories. They are invariably confined to human understanding, reflections on literary principles and general aesthetics. They either modernize the past or fossilize the present. Their tendency is to

[1] I often think that Huysmann's *Durtal in La Cathédrale* epitomises Baudelaire more adequately than any amount of commentary.

confirm or justify individual belief irrespective of right or wrong. If we wish to seek unity in a poet (and there *does* exist a filament of tradition) the only satisfactory method is by analysis and comparison,—a method exploited by de Gourmont, and others in our own time. Theories again disintegrate the personality, and in the case of Laforgue and Mallarmé they led to a destructive esotericism. Theoretical criticism and poetry circumscribe mental satisfaction as I discovered to my regret in Mr. Herbert Read's latest volume of critical essays : they titivate but seldom inspire a genuine spiritual reaction. There is challenge, but no response ; there is struggle, but no ultimate victory. That is confirmed by *Les Fleurs du Mal* where, in the attempt to combat Romanticism's anti-intellectualism by sexual sublimation and other types of " satanism," Baudelaire cerebrates emotion until everything becomes too intellectualized, until emotion ceases to be emotion. It might be argued that in the case of Hopkins he did not suffer but increased in evocative power : true, but Hopkins was not seeking the philosopher's stone. He had accepted Catholicism, therefore his struggle was to put over his beliefs in the most majestic form possible, and in that respect I have still to be convinced that the modernists believe anything.

There has been in the post-war years a movement towards isolation. Our Communist friends will aver that that is untrue. Is it ? They will aver that since the War the perplexities and complexities of human life have played a major part in modern poetry, and that the poet (who holds, of course, the " only true doctrine ") has left Parnassus and mingled with the crowd. But, I would ask, in the mingling has he been a partaker of the misery, the sorrow and the hate which he found there ? We can mingle with the people, but before we can give we must take, before we can become part of the flame we must be burned to the greatest depths. We must cultivate the experience, not let it blow round us like any wind. It is the tragedy of modern poetry that there is a zeal to portray but not to suffer. Every time I hear the " among the people " argument I am reminded of Rilke's cry

. . . Wie sie doch alle
wohnen im warmen Gedicht, häuslich, und lang
bleiben im schmalen Vergleich.

We have around us the same conditions as in the past with the exception that industrialism and progress have altered the visual and auditory surface of life. We still suffer, we still starve, we still love and hate, but we certainly do not give our lives rich, colourful expression. And the reason? There is no fidelity: everything is a betrayal, a mockery out of which, we are told, beauty cannot appear; and so, I presume, we should just turn on the light, bring out our books and experiment with prosody, a few leaves of biography and discoveries in reading. I have only to read Mr. Auden's

And the traveller hopes: "Let me be far from any
Physician"; And the ports have names for the sea;
The citiless, the corroding, the sorrow;
And North means to all: "Reject!"

And the great plains are for ever where the cold fish is hunted
And everywhere; the light birds flicker and flaunt;
Under the scolding flag the lover
Of islands may see at last,

Faintly, his limited hope. . . .

to realize that we are dealing with an expensive camera but rarely an illuminating poet. Somehow the world appears to Mr. Auden to be something photographic, and that his only concern is to be a good journalist at all costs. And that is an interesting point. The development of the modern newspaper has placed a heavy hand upon literature. The modern poem, I think, is a brother of the tabloid, where everything, emotive, imaginative, is compressed into sma' buik: everything is explained in the crudest terms, there is no request for response, no aftermath. You read or you don't, and in the case of modern poetry you rarely read but go back to the more "staid" and "classical" poets. Of the new English school I have only come across two satisfying writers, Prokosch and Whistler. Here we have simplicity, and what evocation!

If the world is chaotic, if power-politics indicate a decline, a breaking-down of civilization, a suicidal avalanche over which we have no control, surely there is some one with sufficient genius, sufficient perception to preserve it, not in hieroglyphics, but in an intellectual form which every man and woman can understand? The conflict of States or conditions or creeds does not mean that man's medium of expression should be the same. Surely there should be an attempt to impart cohesion and solidarity to the society thus created? Instead of giving a new lease of life to civilization our poetry is merely supporting a house built on sand. If there is no artistry is it too much to hope that art will supply it? There is, after all, such a thing as a synthesis of the old and new, and despite the alarming designs of modern architecture and the excreta of city culture there is an attempt at unity, a brave effort to combine such characteristics. Tristan Corbière achieved it with remarkable success in his Breton poems, and while there is that modern aptitude for cinematography at the expense of emotive development we do catch life, full-bosomed, in those rugged measures. Modernism, despite its genuflexions, can escape spiritual anarchy by means of a synthesis, but so long as our poets insist on making theory a substitute for living then the situation ends in defeatism. I cannot quote a better example than Mr. Day Lewis's "Sex-Crime," in his latest volume, *Overtures To Death*—

> For one, the sudden fantastic grimace
> Above, the red clown's-grin ripping the chalk sad sky,
> Hailstones hatched out of midsummer, a face
> Blanched with love's vile reversal. . . .
>
> Accomplices
> All of you, now—though now is still too late—
> Bring on the missing evidence! Reveal the coiled
> Venom, the curse that needs
> Only a touch to be articulate.
> You, Judge, strip off. Show us the abscess boiling
> Beneath your scarlet. Oh, point, someone, to where it spreads
> On every hand—the red, collusive stain. . . .
> All too well you have done your work: for one is dead,
> And the other will not be whole again.

And then this—

> Plus tard l'eau soulevait une masse vaseus.
> Dans le dock. On trouva des plaques de vareuse,
> Un cadavre bossu, ballonné, démasqué,
> Par les crabes. Et ça fut jeté sur le quai,
> Tour comme l'autre soir, sur une couverture.
> Restant de crabe, encore il servit de pâture,
> Autrire du public; et les gamins d'enfants,
> Jouant au bord de l'eau noire sous le beau temps,
> Sur sa bosse tapaient comme sur un tambour
> Crevé. . . .
> Le pauvre corps avait connu l'amour.

My appreciation goes far deeper in this excerpt from Corbière than the suggestion of death: there is an evocative power, so evocative that the brutality, the utter criminality of life is made unbearable and there is moreover unobtrusive technique. But what can we say about "Sex Crime"? I am susceptible to imagic duality, even capable of admiring the plaintive "And the other will not be whole again," but I maintain that Mr. Day Lewis has not written poetry. He is outside the rim when he should be inside. The effect of his poem depends upon terseness of expression, but terseness demands artistry; all I can find here is the commonplace. It seems to me that this type of writing which aims at looking at life from the outside is self-destructive. The poem, taken in its entirety, is wordy despite the summation of incident, and I fail to see the point in what is, I assume, meant to be pathetically reflectory, the

> Accomplices,
> All of you, now—though now is still too late. . . .

The creative work should enfold and envelope. We should live it for the moment. A new, but strangely familiar world. That is the test of great creative work. I am far from suggesting that the poet should bind himself to a definite pattern: if he is a great poet or has a vestige of merit the pattern will steal into his work; what I am suggesting, however, is that there should be no surrender to confusing influences, no disintegration of personality,

but rather a holding aloof,[1] an adherence to the principle of beauty which is " concentrated and sublimated dynamic." But it must not be felt that I am dismissing all modern poetry or its cohorts. On the contrary it is admitted that the recognition of the reality of the Universe, the conception of society as a vital actuality of which human beings form a central part have enlarged consciousness. But I agree with Mr. William Power, that fine Scottish critic, that " this is not specially a literary revolution." It is, as he says, a revolution in science, philosophy, sociology. Many of the so-called modernists are adopting the latter-day inquisitiveness of Goethe. The world, its effect upon life, its stream of cruelties, unhappiness and internecine conflicts, is blowing round them with the result that an organic work is impossible. Nothing is eliminated : in short, all is highfalutin' hotchpotch. We have bright intelligences but they are all living behind fortifications.

I said earlier in this paper that modern architecture aims at a synthesis of the old and new and I would add that however subtle the structural idea it is conveyed lucidly. That is art. The poet who ignores such artistry, preferring to indulge in obscurities, is a false prophet. It is difficult to realize that the man who wrote

> Ae weet forenicht i' the yow-trummle
> I saw yon antrin thing,
> A watergaw wi' its chitterin' licht
> Ayont the on-ding;
> An' I thocht o' the last wild look ye gied
> Afore ye deed !
>
> There was nae reek i' the laverock's hoose
> That nicht—an' nane i' mine ;
> But I hae thocht o' that foolish licht
> Ever sin' syne ;
> An' I think that mebbe at last I ken
> What your look meant then.

could descend to this

> What logodaedaly shall we practise then ?
> What loxodromics to get behind the light ?

[1] There is a fine distinction here between personality and emotion. To escape personality is not a destruction of emotive influences.

Glistening with exoskeletal stars we turn in vain
This way and that and but changing perigraphs gain,
Parablepsies, calentures, every cursed paranthelion
Of this theandric force Pepper's-ghosting God.

And Mr. Hugh MacDiarmid is no small poet. Indeed, in vital things he outpaces that semi-modernist Mr. T. S. Eliot. Unfortunately the Scot has, since Circumjack Cencrastus, distintegrated whereas Mr. Eliot has proceeded to a finer integration.[1] The latter in his later poetry appeals to the common man, the man who can appreciate the old and the new, who is saturated with great poetry, but Mr. MacDiarmid at times appeals to the uncommon man who, unfortunately for the modernists, exists in the imagination but not in fact. It might as well be stated now that the real function of poetry is to make ideas live, and that can only be accomplished by fusion of thought and passion, melody, mnemonic power. If ideas die, freedom dies: Germany is a bitter example. With the advent of totalitarian atrocities the influence of literature has declined. *And it is my purpose here to stress that if our literature, prose and poetry, fails to exercise wide spiritual and human power then we can resign ourselves to the collapse of freedom.*

Modernism, I fear, is an evasion. It does not attempt to think as every man thinks: it employs a fraudulent method which I do not intend, in this paper, to interpret. What is important for my purpose is the undeniable fact that of all poetry modernism is the least relished; and the fact that Mr. Louis MacNeice is, according to his publishers, the most neglected of the school indicates that it has little or no poetic value in our time. I have cleared my mind of all prejudice, tried to appreciate the obscurities, tried to find something elevating in the jazz of words and metre—even admitted that there is a definite technique—but there is such a lack of sympathy and faith which this brave new world needs so much that the shining armour soon rusts. I have said that however artificial the present may seem it is an essential component of the past. That is true. Contemporary poets, however, do not

[1] For a long time I misunderstood the real power and beauty of Mr. Eliot's work, although it does possess many disquieting characteristics.

realize that or decline to admit it. They maintain, with half an eye on the Romantic Movement, that the past was an escape from reality, and that the present demands a new set of feelings. They fail to see that the past is an essential part of their work and that the chaotic winds which blow round that work are due to the struggle against cultural destiny. We are not demanding a return to the Romantic Movement: what we do ask is a renewal of the beautiful in life, less preoccupation with the atrophied aspects of cities, and a return to the great primary emotions and all that is related to them. And I do not need to go outside Scotland to find the truth of that. In *A Fantasia Written In An Industrial Town*, Mr. William Jeffrey has captured the spirit of the time, of industrialized Scotland ; it is a poem which I consider, in the light of rereading, far ahead of the Age. There is throughout the fabric a distinct plea for the integrity of man, not a foolish lament on the conditions which make life hell ; and Mr. Jeffrey, in the experiences arising out of changing conditions, gives to his reader an overpowering belief in his faith of a renewal of the finer sensibilities in a world which has almost forgotten that such things exist. Indeed, after a close study of Scottish poetry, especially that of Mr. William Soutar, MacDiarmid and Jeffrey, I am convinced that Scottish literature is in the ascendancy, and will in a few years reach the peak, whereas in the case of England poetry will have declined rapidly into stock responses and conventional situations. In Scottish poetry today there is the attempt to realize what is concrete without being abstruse, and its principal feature is in its attitude to Life. I cannot escape the conviction that in contemporary English poetry everything is negative. Its creatures may swear, drink, indulge all their animal appetites, but we do not extract from them living tissue. It is a dead universe : in Scottish poetry it is an affirmation of life. And I believe that this is due to a more mature understanding of civilization and culture. Until the poet moderates his metrical brilliancy for the lucid telling phrase there will be no such thing as genuine poetry in England. That may seem severe, but it is true.

Today pride is encouraged, the sense of personal weakness is denounced, and humility before God is scorned. We see them everywhere—in our homes, our offices, shops and factories; they have even insinuated themselves into the child-mind, and of all beings the child is the natural poet. It is chaos, but instead of taking it up and organizing it, giving it a new life, a new spiritual law, instead of carrying on the work of creative evolution until something significant appears the twentieth century poet adds more hot water to the pot by surrendering to literary clowning, foolish tricks and every conceivable form of inanity. He is a coward: he evades. It is, I think, a great pity that there was no one at the time of Hopkins to carry on the work he started.[1] Hopkins may have possessed some queer ideas about prosody but he certainly could make his poetry evocative, and this was impressed upon me when recently re-reading *The Wreck of the Deutschland* and comparing it with Mr. Day Lewis's *The Nabara*. I think this needs no comment:

> Thou mastering me
> God! giver of breath and bread;
> World's strand, sway of the sea;
> Lord of living and dead;
> Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh,
> And after it almost unmade, what with dread,
> Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?
> Over again I feel thy finger and find thee.

And this from *The Nabara:*

> Freedom is more than a word, more than the base coinage
> Of statesmen, the tyrant's dishonoured cheque, or the dreamer's mad
> Inflated currency. She is mortal, we know, and made
> In the image of simple men who have no taste for carnage
> But sooner kill and are killed than see that image betrayed.

Is there in the whole of European poetry (it is proper, I am told, to talk "Europeanly") a more commonplace statement? "Freedom is more than a word," it begins and so on and so on. A fine poem might have been composed round the episode which Mr. Day Lewis takes from

[1] I am not unaware of Dr. Bridges' fine work in "sprung rhythm" in more or less "classical" forms.

G. L. Steer's *The Tree of Gernika*, but the poet was evidently more concerned with explaining away the episode rather than giving it the power of his imagination and, I hope, the emotion which stirred him at the time of reading. In *The Nabara* he expresses the minor moments, the confusion of his own mind. Every poet starts from his own emotions. And the modernist is deluded by the belief that emotion is dangerous. Everything must have intellectual acidity, it must burn without feeling, have meaning without response. That is a doctrine which any sane man will challenge. Good poetry is not based on vague emotion but precise emotion just as a full life is not based on thinking it out but in living it. The surprising thing about the brighter intelligences is that they forget there are degrees of feeling just as there are degrees of thought; and I would add that the collapse of modern poetry is due to this inability to feel precisely and cogently. I believe that the Celtic element in Scottish life has been the means of saving the country's poets from cerebrating emotion, and in all MacDiarmid's writings I have traced this dilemma of intellectualism versus emotion. There is plenty of evidence to show that the first step of the negation of life is denial of primary instincts, and I would suggest that there can be no poetic value in modernism until the school leaves the ivory towers and highbrow anthologies.

I have been struggling to explain that there is only one sure guide—the inner voice. At one time I was inclined to scorn this idea, but I have only to read

> Nel suo profondo vidi che s'interna,
> legato con amore in un volume,
> ciò che per l'universo si squaderna;
> Sustanzia ed accidenti, e lor costume,
> quasi conflati insieme per tal modo,
> che ciò ch' io dice è un semplice lume.
> La forma universal di questo nodo
> credo ch' io vidi, perchè più di largo,
> dicendo questo, mi sento ch' io godo.
> Un punto solo m 'è maggior letargo,
> che venticinque secoli alla impresa,
> che fe' Nettuno ammirar l'ombra d'Argo.

and then this from Mr. Auden's, *Look, Stranger*—[1]

Here on the cropped grass of the narrow ridge I stand,
A fathom of earth, alive in air,
Aloof as an admiral on the old rocks,
  England below me:
Eastward across the Midland plains
An express is leaving for a sailor's country;
  Westward is Wales
Where on clear evenings the retired and rich
From the french windows of their sheltered mansions
See the Sugarloaf standing, an upright sentinel
  Over Abergavenny.

to understand what the inner voice means.

I tried at the beginning of this paper to soften down the fundamental weaknesses of modernism by pleading that we thought too much of names and too little of the work. I have compared the poetry of two well-known English writers with Dante and Hopkins; indeed I could take the whole school analytically in an effort to bring out of the parts something of unity, but the results, I fear, would be disillusioning. Modernism has its ear too close to the ground, believing that what it hears is the expression of a tormented world when it is, alas, only self-expression. There have been many artificial worlds such as that in Marston's *The Insatiate Countess*, but none so blind, so unbelievably vacuous of cosmic influence, so utterly given up to the winds that blow in high places as this one.

O quanto è corto il dire, e come fioco
al mio concetto!

MACCALLUM SMITH.

[Mr. Peter McCallum Smith, who is on the editorial staff of George Outram and Co., Ltd., of Glasgow, is re-writing his important book, *Some Aspects of Modern Scots Literature*. His previous authoritative POETRY REVIEW articles will be remembered as important contributions to his special subject:—"A Scotch Revivalist—(Hugh MacDiarmid)," November, 1936; "The Poetry of William Jeffrey," March, 1937, and "The Poetry of William Soutar," July, 1938. Mr. McCallum Smith is a Vice-President of The Poetry Society, and Secretary of the Scottish Centre of the P.E.N. Club.]

[1] Mr. Auden writes well when imitating the ballad form. A recent Song of his with an underlying balladic note reveals what a fine poet he can be when his thought is disciplined by narrative. Indeed, the ballad demands simplicity, and Mr. Auden has accepted the rule and exceeded expectations. I do believe that he is "finding" himself. I only hope English poetry will benefit.

THE MALTESE AND THEIR POETRY

A PEOPLE numbering about two hundred and thirty thousand, and inhabiting three islands of a group of four in the Mediterranean, the main one lying about sixty miles south of Sicily, politically British colonies, with the oldest University in the Empire overseas, are the Maltese, with some of whose poets we are going to deal. On the authority of Diodorus Siculus, confirmed by the Acts, chapter xxviii and several archaeological finds, the first known inhabitants of the islands were the Phoenicians, the most industrious and highly civilized people of the time, but as that was over three thousand years ago, racially the Maltese Islands, strategically situated within easy reach of powerful neighbours, have changed so considerably that we may say that the most enduring and primitive link with the remote past is not so much the Maltese people of to-day as their language. Culturally, the Maltese, one of the earliest Christian peoples in the world, have always formed an integral part of Latin Christendom; ethnographically, they are a distinct Mediterranean people and whatever Phoenician blood, if any, has survived the impact of intermarriage and later settlement has been attenuated to the point of extinction. The cumulative effect of many outside influences, mainly from Latin countries, covering a period of, roughly, over three thousand years, in which several powers in their turn dominated the islands, has resulted in the creation of a small nation, with a language and history of her own, as much entitled to her national individuality, and, with that, her literature as, say, England or Italy, the one her ruler the other her neighbour. In spite of racial admixture, the people as a nation form a homogeneous whole with one native language, Maltese, nor is there any discontinuity in their history but only a process of racial evolution on a basis of progressive assimilation as found more or less all over Europe. Though Maltese has always been the only native language of the inhabitants, for as many as six centuries, perhaps, Sicilian, Latin and Italian were in their turn and at times simultaneously the only

cultural languages of the Maltese; especially Italian, that, though spoken by the educated minority only up to a short time ago, was, to all intents and purposes, treated as the national language of Malta. Our laws and legal transactions were all written in this language, and also our poets expressed themselves in the *lingua del si*. The result was that for years Malta had her Italian poets[1] but none that wrote in Maltese. As was inevitable with the rise of national consciousness, Italian has recently lost its political status even in our law courts, where Maltese are now tried in their native language. The position that Italian still retains in the higher schools is purely cultural and as such, now that things have been put right, may be allowed to retain that position as a foreign language. The status of Maltese was so anamolous that a reaction was bound to come sooner or later. We must have a National literature. The more enlightened writers, echoing the protest of a Maltese scholar, revolutionary in these matters, who flourished more than a century ago, began to ask disturbing questions, "Why should not our people have a literature of their own, a record of their national feeling and individual experiences?" True, we had our Italian poets, but they were inaccessible to the people and that class discrimination in literature was unfair. A few of our writers, some of them with a well established reputation as Italian poets, began to write excellent verse in their own tongue. The experiment was a revelation to the people. It was a message. The demand for a genuinely national literature increased, and Malta witnessed one of the acutest language questions, a struggle between Italian and Maltese for survival and supremacy. The latter has now been officially recognized as our national language; it is the language of our law courts and of our new poetry.

The first of our writers to make a name as a Maltese poet was Dr. Gio. Ant. Vassallo (1817–1867), historian and professor of Italian, who wrote exquisite lyrics and a short

[1] An anthology of Maltese poets who wrote in Italian has been compiled by Signor Oreste Ferdinando Tencajoli (Poeti Maltese D'Oggi—Angelo Signorelli, Editore—Roma). The selection is very good. Unfortunately, those interested in poetry for its own sake will find the compiler's biassed comments very disappointing.

epic. The most notable after him was G. Muscat-Azzoppardi (1853–1927), himself a student and admirer of Italian, and a very good novelist. As a poet, he could express himself very forcibly making of Maltese, then still very uncouth from the artist's point of view, a wonderfully pliable vehicle of poetic expression. His experiment, the beautiful poetry of a high order that he wrote, instantly appealed to several others and the harvest has since been plentiful, for their number increased constantly and Malta can now boast her national poets, cultured writers most of them speaking or understanding several languages besides their own, that are able to keep in touch with the development of the European Muse, mainly English, Italian, classical Latin, and, some add, French. The works of a few of these poets have been very ably translated into French by the novelist Laurent Ropa and all quotations, as no English translation is available, will be given from his *Poëtes Maltais*. This anthology of Maltese Verse appears in the series *Les Cahiers De Barbarie*, published by Armand Guibert, an accomplished French writer, responsible for several poetic translations from the Italian, Spanish and English, one from the last mentioned language being Roy Campbell's *Adamastor*. Armand Guibert undertook the publication of the anthology at his own expense, solely out of love for poetry, wherever it may be found. His effort was much appreciated in Malta, and I who met him personally, and chatted with him at Xlendi, one of the quietest bays in Gozo, where he spent a few of his holidays working undisturbed on a book of his own, shall always remember him for his most extraordinary faith in poetry that is to him, as he told me, the highest and worthiest vehicle of human expression. The book, the first of the kind in any language, proved a success. It sold out—an extraordinary thing for an anthology of verse—poets will agree !

The most highly spoken of in this anthology is Dun Karm, the best known, and certainly most important of our writers, admired as an Italian poet, and described as the Zanella of Malta before he had yet made a name as such in his own language. Those with an ear for Italian rhythm

might appreciate the following quotation from his beautiful poem *Agricoltura :*

Sotto i dardi del sol, che abbronza e adugge
L'umana carne,
Di fronte all'aquilon che freme e rugge
Nel mesto ottobre tra le querce scarne
Selvaggiamente,
Bello è incallir le mani e su pe' solchi
Gittar sperando
L'eterno seme.

But he owes his greatest importance to us as a Maltese poet. His sonnets, remarkable for the perfection of their technique, are masterpieces of rhythm and powerfully expressed vision. His chief qualities as a poet are a gift for well-balanced rhythm, unsurpassed command of poetic diction and the power to idealize reality by a process of inspired synthetic thinking, by which I mean that his poetry is not compounded of sheer imagination, but of an imagination informed with the beautiful thoughts of a cultured mind. One of his outstanding poems is *Non Omnis Moriar*—the Latin heading is taken from one of Horace's best known odes. The following extract in rhythmic prose gives us his idea of poetry. It is not the scientific definition of the aesthetician but the intuition of a poet, and even if, like most great ideas, it goes back to the distant past, it is certainly worth our attention as a modern restatement of the poet's function as a *Vates* whose inspiration is an *afflatus divinus*, the more so as some of our contemporary Verse writers all over Europe seem to be more anxious to cut capers for the enjoyment of the mob than to live up to this ideal. " La voix du poète," we are told, " est l'écho de la voix de la création ; l'inspiré ne parle pas de son propre mouvement ; comme résonne la harpe quand les doigts assouplis courent avec art sur les fils accordés, ainsi vibre le poète quand le touche la main de Dieu. Messagère du Bien, miroir de la Beauté, sa parole est céleste, et ce qui vient du ciel n'a ni vieillesse ni terme: le poète disparait, le Chant demeure." Space does not allow me to quote the far more interesting passage in which he exemplifies by means of beautiful imagery how the poet

interprets the universal longing of humanity for beauty, as it has manifested itself in civilizations now destroyed by time, in contemporary life and even in man's suffering and disillusion. The poet's mind in this respect is but a synthesis of this universal aspiration and as such his message is as universal as humanity itself.

To prove the flexibility or Maltese, he has translated the well known poem *I Sepolcri* of Ugo Foscolo, a beautiful work of which the Italians are rightly proud, but Foscolo's aspirations stop suddenly at the grave with a memorial to commemorate " Genius " ; that is his idea of life's Omega ; and that is certainly not Dun Karm's philosophy. Our poet is one of those dissatisfied with this pseudo-ideal ; it leaves him spiritually famished and he demands something less unsubstantial. So the translation was followed by an original poem *The Ego and the Beyond* consisting of five hundred and twenty-three lines, and expressing the Christian outlook on Life and Death, and the painful problems that crop up between, not in the self-complacent moralizing of the preacher, but with the delicate sensibility of the artist who understands the difficulties of life and smarts under them in the inevitable moments of doubts to which even the best often succumb ; but Dun Karm triumphs where Foscolo fails miserably ; he kicks the dust of the grave off his feet and ventures into the Beyond for the spiritual fulfilment of man's hunger for peace and happiness. And artistically he is as successful.

Another outstanding poet, but less varied in the choice of his subjects, is the Rev. Anastasi Cuschieri, a Carmelite professor of philosophy, and, as a writer, a man of manifold activity, ranging from a philosophical controversy with Senator Benedetto Croce to poetry in Italian and Maltese, mainly religious in inspiration, though by no means exclusively so. His Maltese religious poetry at times has the aggressive emphasis of the psalms with which his mind is naturally imbued, and at their smoothest his poems rival the famous *Inni Sacri* of Alessandro Manzoni. Unfortunately, for reasons of copyright, his name does not appear in *Poētes Maltais*, so we can only quote a short passage from

one of his Italian poems *AI Caduti di Ieri*, inspired by the horrors of the Great War, a catastrophe that seems to have haunted him :

Ed ora stanno là, quasi luridi
Cenci, là in fosche boscaglie, poveri
Caduti : tra breve
Spariscono sotto la neve.

Io, da questo cor voglio, poveri
morti, a voi sotto quel gelo, l'alito
mio venga e vi porti
la Pace beata dei morti.

Ninu Cremona is our best playwright. His poems, the richest in local colour, appeal to a rather restricted audience because he is not always easy to understand. His is not the much abused suggestive obscurity that Mallarmé would have us cultivate in poetry, but rather the obscurity of involved thinking, such as one finds in Robert Browning when he proves most puzzling. However, I have always insisted in my critical estimations of his work, that his obscurity and involved constructions notwithstanding, he is worth study for the original imagery that very often surprises us by its boldness, anyhow, as a relief from the usual smooth diction. So he sings the

Fils de la grande Istar, de Celle qui porte des cornes,
Symboles de la Force et du Sang !

And in his play *The Redemption of the Peasants* he exalts the touching heroism of our ancestors when in very difficult times they were subjected to severe hardships by their foreign masters. Ruzar Briffa, one of the younger poets, is a romanticist, the most so of all. He is one of our most exquisite poets, gifted with a very fine sensibility. His poem *Tired Yet Unsatisfied* has the dream-like atmosphere of one of Walter de la Mare's poems. The meaning that you can make out of it is that it purports to express in the pale tints of mystery the will to life face to face with death. His poem, of a different order of inspiration, on the Woman of Sin, is worth quoting :

Il y en avait mille à la connaître,
mille avaient joui des lèvres
de la femme d'amour,

de la femme de chair:
nul d'entre eux n'essuya ses yeux,

Qui l'avait aimée le soir
et oint ses cheveux de parfums,
le matin la fuyait,
clouait ses péchés dans son honneur ;
il la faisait rougir,
la vilipendait, l'appelant
femme du péché.

Un Seul, toute bonté,
la salua, seulement Un,
et tombée à ses pieds ne la voulait souffrir.
Il lui toucha les yeux,
lui redit la parole.

" Tu as beaucoup aimé,
c'est pourquoi il te sera beaucoup pardonné ;
ne recommence pas ; va en paix."

Et la foule indignée près de là réunie méditait sa vengeance;
Et elle pensa pour cet Unique, à la Croix.

George Pisani, also one of the younger poets, enjoys a good reputation that he very well deserves ; his translated poems are historical and therefore their appeal to the non-Maltese is limited because of insufficient understanding, but his muse ranges from the earliest glory of Maltese prehistory to anything so ghastly modern as the Gas-mask. His lyrical poetry, and even here as in history, he is at his best, is characterized by a deep sadness, a sense of frustration that somehow holds on to hope. It is not so with Karmelu Vassallo whose pessimism is often morbid, but his mastery of rhythm and his imagery, varied within the limited range of a few personal topics, more than make up for the morbidity of his pessimism. Other younger poets are G. Chetcuti, with a very good ear for well-balanced rhythm, Arthur Vassallo, whose poetry is marked by a pleasing imagination, and Ant. Buttigieg, showing obvious influences of modern English poetry. There are, of course, others, but as they are less prolific and also less representative in style, we shall leave them out.

In this sketchy survey of contemporary Maltese poetry, I have noted that our poets prefer the traditional metres, and none represents any of the modern schools of verse. Religion in its various aspects is a common subject matter. The reason for their partiality for the traditional metrical forms is that they want to give Malta not ingenious puzzles but a really good poetry that will stand the test of time. Such countries as England, Italy and France are so rich in great poetry that they can easily afford to miss all the moderns should time decide against them, whereas Malta cannot start building her national literature with doubtful experiments.

As for the frequency of religious themes I must explain that the Maltese poet, as a Catholic, has to face a fixity of dogmas that command his faith, and therefore offer him no difficulty. He does not experiment with his Faith, for that is to him a fact subjectively and objectively and as such cannot be made a subject for arbitrary experience to base thereon a vague religion that is purely personal as is the case with several poets with mystic minds. As far as religion is concerned, he simply records poetically his spiritual reaction to it, always within the limits of immovable dogma invested with an imagination more or less intense that lights it up like a splendour of the inscrutable. After all, it is within these almost limitless limits that Dante wrote his *Divina Commedia*, and recently in England Francis Thompson his *Hound of Heaven*. J. AQUILINA.

Our distinguished contributor may himself be included among the poets of Malta as well as being prominently active in the cause of the Maltese language, contributing articles on the subject of Maltese Nationalism to several journals. Jointly with P. P. Saydon, a well known Maltese writer and Professor of Hebrew, Dr. Aquilina has compiled the first literary anthology of Maltese in three volumes, now prescribed as textbooks in the higher schools, and he has edited the *Journal of the English Literary Society of Malta University*, the aim of which is the encouragement of English literature and British culture in Malta. He has been joint editor of a Maltese literary monthly to which he has contributed verse and prose, and has been awarded first prize for the best novel in Maltese in a Government competition for the encouragement of Maltese literature.

THE SWORD

DAMASCUS ! When those lightnings sparked
Upon the anvils of your forge,
Then flashed the Sword
That Cross on Crescent laid.
Blue soared that pride above the earth,
And on your looms was lordly stuff for banners spread,
Rich as the sun.

But now, no more.
No more shall splendour light the darkling East,
With those annealing fires,
Nor burn the aisles of Time with beauty's rose,
Nor yet again flash out your damascene
Above great battles.

How swift the music of your sword,
The singing of your spear,
That led crusading spirits on,
To guard the Sepulchre !
How leapt those flames into the holy blue,
That now are gone !

We shall not hear that singing of the host
Against an alien horde,
In this our day, in any Palestine,
Nor see again compassion shine,
That was the constant of the Sword.

No more shall that swift loveliness
Breach out asylum for a pitiful ghost,
And think the sword well swung,
Nor guard again that gentle Tomb—
Whose fires are burning in Creation's womb,
Whose steel is burnished by the flames of hell.

O lost Damascus ! Your bright armoury
Is levelled with the dust, and leaves no shade ;
The wind goes over ;
Even the rust is scattered by the wind,

On an uncertain road,
(And that the wind has made).

O Lost! O Fair!
Now is your story told, your fable ended;
But as a city of the mind,
You loom, you shine, you tremble,
Assemble, shade by shade,
With one immortal forge to grind,
The one immortal blade.

So stands the city!
So gleams the Sword! Cross on a Crescent sky;
And holds its pity, its lightning stroke,
Suspended. GERTRUDE VALLANCE.

Capetown.

IF I COULD LEARN AS OTHERS DO . . .

IF I could learn, as others do,
To take this dull earth as it comes,
And view, with such an open mind,
The quarrels in my neighbours' homes,
And tolerate, with perjured taste,
The hideous jests that pass for fun,
Futilities of screen and stage,
And forms of criticism shun;
To see the good, ignore the bad
In men and women, books and acts,
And never give my view on things
Before I know the fullest facts,
To turn a blind eye on the truth
And acquiesce in things I know
Are cheap and false and meaningless,
Content in doing so;
Then there would be no dull despair,
No haunting visions while I sleep,
But I would lose the right to laugh
And be denied the right to weep.

DEREK B. READE.

EVIL

A WEIGHT of evil lies upon the world,
Intolerable, foul, the serpent curled
About the tree of life, and still pursuing
Our race to its undoing.

A poison, a miasma, in its drift
Invading every corner, every rift
Of human life, and marring man's existence
With subtle, sly insistence.

This pestilence it is that throws a taint
Upon the very air, appals the saint,
And tinges every good device with evil:
Men call it fate or devil;

Beelzebub, or Ahriman, the lord
Of darkness, the old dragon, the Abhorred,
The Fiend, the Tempter, turning heaven's mercies
To stumbling and to curses.

One moment crouching like a thing at bay,
The next, a monster leaping on its prey,
A stream of hell's iniquity, emerging
And like a torrent surging.

And then the earth is shaken with the throes
Of suicidal slaughter; hence the woes
Of this our day, the blasphemy and terror,
The cracking of life's mirror!

And now, for all our progress, all our pains,
And mighty growth in knowledge, lo, the gains
Of centuries are threatened with dispersal,
And ruin universal!

The world without is conquered: but the realm
Of mind and soul, what floods may overwhelm,
If men, denying the sonship they inherit,
Exalt the Evil Spirit!

Stupendous Power! Only perfect Light
Can dissipate the blackness of our night,
And only perfect Love, sublime and lowly,
Can resurrect us wholly.

A Love that stoops to suffer, pierced and dying,
A Love that bears the uttermost, defying
The might of hell, the earthy, the infernal—
This Love is Life Eternal!

MARGARET ORMISTON.

SOME MORNING

SOME morning I shall not awake
To hear the singing of the birds,
You may not know, yet I may take
Unseen, a part untold in words.

Where someone labours all unsung,
I'll whisper to his listening ear
A rhyme or rhythm of the tongue
To voice his urgent hope or fear.

And all I've learned of muse or song,
I'll tell to one who would begin.
Perchance I'll help a lad along
Who learned still less, but listens-in.

MARIE TELLO PHILLIPS.

AVENUE

I WOULD wind my arms about trees,
I would trees should sway at my will,
I would wind my arms about trees,
And the world, the world should be still.
There should be no stirring of wind,
No sound but the sound of trees,
The soul—rhythm sweeping of trees,
The trees that should sway at my will.

D. L. WHITEMAN.

FAILURE

GREY is the house,
and grey its occupant;
grey is the world outside.
The die is cast.
Wraith-like, the grey man stands and sighs,
"All, all is past."

Far into time
filters the fog-like gloom;
all of the might-have-been,
never to be.
Dimmer than dust, the grey man wails,
"Failure is me."

Through bars of shame
he sees his meagre life;
battles not won—not lost,
not even tried;
dreams of ambitions, which, not born,
had never died.

Thick grows the room
with swirls of choking gas.
Flies from the ceiling drop,
and drowsy wasps.
"Only the deep grey grave for me,"
the grey man gasps.

Down on his knees
he sinks, with laboured breath.
Forward he falls, and writhes,
then lies quite still.
Dusty plumes eddy, and whirl round
the soft grey hill.

There he is found,
curled in a salmon-hump;
not dead, and not alive,
only asleep.

Gently, they try to revive the
motionless heap.

Grey is the bed,
and grey its occupant.
Grey is the life above,
the death beneath.
" Failure in life," sobs the grey man,
" Failure in death."

CON HARVEY.

THE WINDS ARE OUT

THE winds are out, crashing and shouting,
I see them wheel in the rocking trees ;
They ravage the frail fabric of spring,
Careless and lusty, they tear at the delicate morning.

The spring has wrought intolerable beauty.
Surely now the over-burdened heart must break !
Desire flows untamed in the burgeoning of trees,
In the silken calling of the grasses.

I will go where the sea-grasses are beckoning
Under a gull-strewn sky, silver-grey under a sapphire sky ;
Where waves sleek and run, wind-driven,
Poise and stagger and crash, through the sun-shot veil of the spindrift.

The plover's scream is over the winds' shrill screaming
And lark-song bubbles endlessly, tumbled and golden.
I will go where sunshine and shadow race together through the grasses,
And the wild green hair of the willow is unbound above the stream.

The name of my chestnut horse is like whipped flame,
Scarlet his eager nostrils, and his dark eyes are shining ;
Savage and lovely and wild, he plunges and trembles,
He leaps to the lashing of the waves and the branches and the winds. . . .

The winds are elemental and strange.
There is passion under their crying, passion and terror, evil and rapture,
Madness, and mockery like the careless jeering of a child. . . .
Heart and body are the winds of the mind.

DOROTHY MARGARET PAULIN.

Two Poems by Ronald Fuller:

YESTERDAY

NO man knows
the price to pay
for Yesterday,
nor what wind blows
the rose
away.

Ah, whither goes
the fallen leaf,
the ancient grief?
What secret snows
enclose
the brief
remembered loveliness?

He can but guess;
he can but say
to Yesterday,
"Good-bye, sweet Sorrow,"
and go his way
beyond To-morrow.

TOWERS

I BUILT three towers to guard my soul
from treacherous Time:
one was Quiet, one was Friendship,
one was Rhyme.

But Life before my triple walls
lay waiting long,
and there are things too dark for words,
too sad for song.

For all these high triumphant ways
come to their end,
and the world's shadow falls between
friend and friend;

and now with all remembrance done,
sorrows and stains,
out of the three tall towers I built,
one remains.

Pain forgotten, hope surrendered,
healed the scar,
now joy, passion, pride, defiance
quiet are.

RONALD FULLER.

MORGEN

(To-morrow and To-morrow)

LONELY Crag.
Lonely Eagle.
Lonely Man.
Then rising Dawn,
Then upward striving
Then the unfulfilled!
And spirit's outpost
And soul battling
And victory never won!—
But each morn and every morn
Begun.

ETHEL M. STEPHENSON.

FEAR

I, who love the autumn,
Hesitate to pass
Where the feet of hunters
Tread the tired grass.
I might see the blood stains
On some dying leaf;
I might hear the forest
Sighing in its grief.
Frightened by the anguish
Ear hath never heard,
I might hear the sobbing
Of the beast and bird.

ZUELLA STERLING.

SPEECH

WHEN I regard the teeming life around,
Of beast and insect, fish and bird and tree,
I wonder to what end is all I see.
Each generation sinks within the ground,
Its vigour spent, its utmost effort crowned
In passing on its own facsimile
Of equal impulse to a progeny
Within an equal circumscription bound.
They live and die and others take their place
In oft repeated cycle, free from change,
Within the compass of a narrow range,
Nor ever strive to pass their given space :
And, unprogressing, spend their little day,
Attain their limit, fade and pass away.

To us, more blest than other earthly things,
The procreative gift of speech is lent ;
A vehicle of thought ; the instrument
To bear the germinating seed that brings
To other minds, on swift and unseen wings,
A progeny. The spoken word is sent
And with the soil of fertile minds is blent,
Wherefrom another growth abundant springs.
For never spoken word inert remains
And never to itself it lives and dies ;
And none can tell what wonders will arise
From marriage of the word with other brains ;
And none can tell the height that thought may reach,
Nor guess the utmost destiny of speech.

For, mothered in a myriad minds diverse,
The self-same thought to swift conception grows
And metamorphosis unending shows :
Some, voice the glories of immortal verse,
And some, a nascent science tend and nurse,
In others, patriotic fervour glows
And some pure minds a holiness impose
On thought that others cover with a curse.
Incalculable though the issue be,

The word, once spoken, nothing can control :
Life of the mind and essence of the soul,
It bears irrevocable destiny,
And darkest chaos, as of old, is stirred,
And light arises at the spoken word.

ALBERT E. DEWEY.

TARES

GRIEF grows by every bush
Like brambles in September.
It is not rare
As joy and gentian are,
That those who gather it should crush
The fragrance from its heart, or long remember.

Men need not climb or dive
Or cross the sea to find it.
Every man knows
The strangling weed that grows
Among the grain by which we live,
And each year's harvesters must reap and bind it.

A. M. WALKER.

A MOMENT'S VISION

IN the dew of her tears momently mingled
The smile of a lonely ray :
The far face of the vesper tingled
With love-translucent day.

Down the vale each farewell flower
Sparkled back her greeting
Radiance-ringed, in the mystic hour
When shadows tremble—retreating.

My wakeful deep, suffused with a softer
Dream of phosphorescence,
Saw Eve's wet eyelash touched to laughter
By a rainbowed evanescence.

DILIP KUMAR ROY.

Pondicherry.

ST. FRANCIS AND THE BIRDS

WHO can tell how they heard?
What bright spirit brought them word?
Thrushes, robins, wrens and sparrows
To the old trees shot like arrows—
Out of every sky a bird!

Out of every shining sky
At some aery spirit's cry
Tits and finches, larks and linnets,
In a few ecstatic minutes,—
Who knows whence? Who knows why?

Who knows how they understood
In each secret solitude?
Merles and martens, choughs and swallows,
Out of all the hills and hollows
Sped into that glimmering wood!

When the last bright hour of day
Gilded earth with slanting ray
In the dim green aisles they flustered,
On the crowded boughs they clustered,
Clung to every swinging spray!

Clung and clustered all together,
Gray or garish, blue or brown,
Through the golden evening weather
Drifted here a glistening feather,
There a silvery wisp of down.

For amidst the twittering choir
Stood a little bird-like friar,
How they loved him! How they fluttered!
Thousand tiny joys they uttered
Pulsing with full hearts desire.

And he blessed them,—wheresoe'er
They should wander in wide air,—
Eyes and hand and voice expressing
All the magic of his blessing
And the love that all could share.

Then, with myriad joyful cries,
And with whirlings, circlewise,
All at once they winged together,
Through the aery evening weather
To the ends of all the skies!

HAROLD GOAD.

TO A CHILD

NO, it is not that you can turn
Flame of a leaf and watch it burn,
That you have eyes to see a faun
Steal through the era of a dawn,
Or that you open up the book
(Through which the years so vainly look)
With ease, at that elusive page
Where pictures of the Golden Age
Show the new flags and stranger fashions
Crusade like music through the passions—
It is not these that make us care,
It is that hope—that hope is there,
And finds you rare, and keeps you fair.

OSCAR WILLIAMS.

QUIET

WHEN I walked out beneath the stars
I felt the breathing might
Of all the quivering silences
That animate the night.

The wind was whipping at the grass,
The sea swirled on the sand:
There was no single quiet thing
In all that quietened land.

The stars were gleaming fitfully;
"There is no rest," I said,
"The moon alone shines quietly,
Above, and she is dead."

GERTRUDE M. FOSTER.

SALUTATION TO PROSERPINE IN JANUARY

(AND TO HER HAMPSTEAD HANDMAID)

"As the train winds up the slope to Castrogiovanni, the ancient Euna, I have seen masses of purple anemone and white narcissus on either side of the line."

SHALL I buy mimosa's golden shower,
Tulip an orphan of May bereft,
Or daffodil, gift of an April hour
That scatters a largess right and left?
No: give narcissus, a white handmaid
From fields of Euna where once you played,
And purple anemone, glowing flower
That sprang from the chasm that Pluto cleft.

Most fair, you have given, in a colder clime,
To a pallid girl your surge of bloom,
And scornful of season, careless of Time,
Smile through a city's prison-gloom
Where a poet climbs a long grey street
Towards Hampstead height and the springs of the Fleet,
—Lo, through the glint of morning rime
The Golden Maiden hath burst her tomb!

GUY KENDALL.

BIRTHPLACE

THIS is a shadow land,
Peopled by formless ghosts,—
Faint ghosts of bitterness
Despair and childish grief,
Dim ghosts of beating wings
Against the bars of youth.

These the bars—
Grim streets and roofs
Spawned by a ravished plain,
This sunless air,
This blind acceptance
Of an ugliness beyond belief,
This slow, unlaughtered toil.

And down these streets
The fading shapes have stirred,
Flitting through buildings
Where despair was born.
Here is no happiness when ghosts hold sway,
Here is no laughter, no relief—
Leave then, their whispering decadence,
Their dying day—

It cannot be;
Their tenuous hands reach out
Faint as the fading light,
More merciless than death.
In fetters forged as these,
Is death a grief?
Where then lies filial happiness,
And where is pain?

MARGARET LOCHERBIE-GOFF

ENTREATY

LONG have I left the Beautiful unsaid,
Daily, instead,
Have gossiped shamelessly of ugliness.
Where now is fled
The gentle joy that all my days should bless?

Long have I ceased my song, to cry of pain,
Till now, in vain,
I strive to woo its tender ministry.
Shall it again
Ever return to joy and comfort me?

Love, break this stubborn wall, this stubborn door!
Love, give once more
Sight of the Beautiful, the old height of song!
From this blank floor
Raise the mute lark, silent too long, too long!

KUNIGUNDE DUNCAN.

Kansas.

POETRY OF RETROSPECT

TO perceive our childhood days slowly receding into the long gone past is one of the most interesting of human emotional experiences. It is also one of the most poignant. At the age of twenty our childhood seems a shackle from which we have but recently escaped. As we approach middle age, childhood memories gather round them a mist that makes of them insubstantial ghosts that may be conjured up in many ways. For some, perhaps, the scent of a particular flower will cause the past to rise up—for another an old tune will bring back memories that fill the mind with sadness. As we grow older, these ageing galleries of our mind are peopled more and more with faces of those now dead. In life we can see them no more but in memory they are still bright-eyed and young.

It is not surprising that this emotion of retrospect has inspired many of our great poets. Hood must have felt it when he wrote "I remember, I remember the house where I was born." Francis Thompson must have felt the sense of the past heavy on him when he wrote the lines found amongst his papers after his death:

> It is little I repair to the matches of the Southron folk,
> Though my own red roses there may blow;
> It is little I repair to the matches of the Southron folk,
> Though the red roses crest the caps, I know.
> For the field is full of shades as I near the shadowy coast,
> And a ghostly batsman plays to the bowling of a ghost,
> And I look through my tears on a soundless-clapping host
> As the run-stealers flicker to and fro,
> To and fro.
> O my Hornby and my Barlow long ago!

From the sun-drenched cricket field through years of destitution on the London streets to his later life of broken health must indeed have seemed a heavy pilgrimage.

There are two aspects of poetry of retrospect which are, to my mind, of great interest. The first is a matter of mood and the second one of poetical technique.

The first is an enquiry into the roots of this mood which is at once so powerful and so sorrowful—that causes the old man to dream of memories that seem more alive in him

than he is himself: "So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more."

Tears, Idle Tears is a fine reflection of the sadness of remembered days. Why are they so sad even when the events remembered were at the time of their happening very happy? It is, of course, a sense of loss—something has departed from us that is irretrievably lost. Our wealth of years has been reduced by that seemingly immense space of time which stretches back and back to our childhood. These years have gone and with them all the mosaic of events which seems so bright in retrospect. By the time we are middle-aged there is deepening in us a suspicion of all change and a desire to stay the sinking of the sands of time. We look back to a time when life was bright with expectation and we look forward with a fear that the best is already over. We cannot bear to think that anything has gone beyond recall, whether it be our youthful strength or a dear-loved face. Above all we cannot bear to think that we have lost the power to *feel* like a child. We yearn to re-feel the child's thrilling sense that he is still living only the prelude to something that will be richer and greater. We mourn that we have lost the vision that can transmute the ordinary into the marvellous,—have lost the power that can see in a candle-flame a mysterious waving plume, and that can enwind the meanest object with a rich garment of the deepest feeling.

I have on several occasions visited scenes of happy early childhood and helped with the sense of the past which they revive have consciously tried to re-feel the thoughts and moods of childhood. It is impossible. The thoughts and feelings of childhood are indeed revived, but it is always with the knowledge that they are *merely* memories, that a gulf lies between me and them, and the sadness of loss of which I have just been writing is superimposed on the original feelings of childhood.

Having thus briefly reviewed the mood, I turn to a consideration of its technical interpretation in poetry. I know of no mood so difficult to convey in poetry and there are good reasons why this should be so. The

difficulty is due, I think, to the fact that the mood is stimulated in different persons by totally differing scenes and objects. With other emotions this is not so much the case. The scenes that arouse patriotism in me will arouse it in most other persons and these scenes and symbols can be poetically portrayed, thus communicating the mood to the reader. The stars have from ancient time aroused in every man the sense of wonder. By a descriptive poem of drawn curtains shutting out the night with the family quietly sitting around the blazing fire, the poet can effectively communicate the sense of domestic peace. But no such symbolism conveys the mood of retrospect. The sound of sea waves on the shingle may carry me back irresistibly to childhood with a haunting sense of the past, but to another reader such a sound may carry no emotional charge or may remind him merely of last year's holiday. In each one of us the sense of the passing of time is evoked by totally different imagery.

An example of this difficulty, as regards prose writing, is to be found in passages in many volumes of memoirs in which the author treats of his early childhood. I do not think I am alone in often finding such passages very tedious, and the reason is, I think, that the writer is describing early scenes which are to him poignantly significant but he forgets that it is not because of any intrinsic interest that they are to him so significant. For him and for him alone they have become invested with a sense of the irretrievable past. For him they are rich with a thousand associated memories which create an aura about them which cannot possibly be communicated to the reader. Whilst, therefore, I believe that the poetic treatment of the mood of retrospect must always be subject to serious limitations, it is interesting to note how far it has overcome them.

I have already referred to *Tears, Idle Tears*, and it will be noted how, throughout this poem, Tennyson makes use of imagery which in itself suggests something that is growing old or passing, sometimes contrasting it with something that is new. The fields are " autumn fields." The " first

beam glittering on a sail" is contrasted with "the last which reddens over one that sinks."

Familiar as the lines are, I quote the third verse—a marvel of technique of mood:

> Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
> The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds
> To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
> The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
> So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

The image of the man dying at dawn with the sound of "half-awakened birds" in his ears conveys as by magic that mood in which memory seems to mock us with the remembrance of days of young hope. The "glimmering square" that gradually grows luminous has been watched so often by every one of us that it is a symbol of dawn to all, and here also by contrasting the birth of the day with the dying man the poet evokes the desired emotional response in the reader.

We may say, therefore, that Tennyson's technique in these verses is to introduce imagery which is *to every reader* associated either with hopeful birth on the one hand or with despairing death on the other. He then brings the opposite images together, thus reproducing the "Death in Life" (to use his own phrase) which is Memory. This technique is clearly not possible if the poet tries to reproduce out of his own experience scenes which are too personal to him to evoke the desired mood in the reader.

I remember of Thomas Hood and Charles Lamb's *The Old Familiar Faces* are two poems of retrospect which as regards technique of mood may be classed together. They both avoid the difficulty we have been considering by dealing with experiences so ordinary that they form a part of the actual memory of almost everyone. The house where we were born, old playmates, an old love, an old friend,—these are their subject matter. In order to keep to ordinary experiences, these poems are of necessity couched in very general language. Lamb does not, for instance, describe the friend that he left "like an ingrate" except to say that he was kind. Whilst the friend remains

undescribed he remains a common experience of everyone. Had Lamb described the friend's features and dress in detail, the poet would have ceased to strike a chord of memory in each one of us, for in all probability we should never have had a friend with such features and dress. The poet by particularizing would have lost the common touch with memory by falling into the very trap which we have previously noted of poetizing too personal a memory. But the technical necessity of keeping the imagery of these poems very general seriously handicaps them to my mind in another direction. For although they touch all of us by virtue of their generality, they are so general that they do not touch us very nearly and intimately.

Oft in the Stilly Night employs a technical device with great effect by introducing a simile of the emotion of remembrance:

> I feel like one
> Who treads alone
> Some banquet-hall deserted,
> Whose lights are fled,
> Whose garlands dead,
> And all but he departed!

I make no apology for taking as my last examples two books that are not verse and that are generally regarded as children's books,—*Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. They have, however, this in common with poetry, that in them the author has written matter which has many overtones and conveys a subtle impression that is infinitely more than the literal meaning of the language used. They are, I submit, triumphantly successful literature of retrospect. No one who reads the verses that precede and that conclude *Through the Looking Glass* can doubt that Lewis Carroll, the bookish mathematician, felt poignantly the gulf between the children for whom he wrote the books and his own years. In what he wrote he mirrored his own childhood and that of every child, but he did so not by writing down a literal history of his own childhood. We have seen that failure lies in any such attempt. In his remarkable mind, the life of a child, felt

by sad memory, was transmuted into these gems of literature. Every mood and facet of childhood seems reflected therein. The child reads them and sees himself. The adult reads them and sees his own childhood, but he sees more than that. He sees also, reflected back through Alice's Looking Glass, the poignancy and curiously sad wisdom which, as the learned mathematician penned the pages, seems to have found its way from his memory to the incredible adventures in which he clothed his mood. This mood shows itself not only in the introductory verses to which I have referred, but in many a passage in which the heart of childhood and the strange fantasies of the book seem to have got inextricably mixed up with the wistful wisdom of the adult. It is a triumph of the symbolism of retrospect. I wish that I could stay to analyze the technique of this book, if indeed technique be the word to employ of a mastery which appears to be so spontaneous. But such an analysis would require an article to itself.

We have now therefore considered means by which writers have, in part, transcended the difficulties of communicating the pathos of the "Death in Life" of memory. It is good, I think, that in spite of such difficulties, the attempt should be made to transcend them. A life lived with the inner mind fixed solely on the moods and outlook of the present cannot be a whole life. Is it not good that we should, at times, try to integrate our life by seeing the whole of its arc at once—try to re-feel our own childhood and then to apply its clear and luminous viewpoint to our maturer difficulties? And if it be granted that a great part of the mission of poetry is to extend our range of feeling so that it is not at the mercy of the busy lives which most of us lead, it must, I think, also be a part of its mission to help us to remember,—to help us to feel again what it is to be a child and thereby to lend truer vision to the eyes of the soul.

WILLIAM WOLFF.

Miss Margaret N. Gibson, (Wellington, N.Z.) renewing her subscription to The Poetry Review, writes:

The arrival of this publication still remains to me a constant source of pleasure and I am looking forward to the forthcoming numbers.

CHINESE PATTERN

WITHIN the great body of Chinese literature you may find almost anything you read in order to prove or uphold your pet theories about life. Only the dictators of totalitarian states might search the Chinese scriptures and remain textless. For there is nothing here that would make them so much as a bombful. But should you belong to the spiritually comfortable classes what a feast awaits you! In quiet reaches of unrippled amber what succulent snails, fat mandarin ducks and the olla podrida emptyings of ageless Chinese inns are embedded. All alive, alive O! for Mr. Lin Yutang has a magic wand which can bring even a dead Shansi rat to life. (*The Importance of Living*, by Lin Yutang, London, Heinemann). He purrs you to your seat, and at his hospitable board, for 15s., inclusive of wine, there are presents on everyone's plate and compliments for all. And how Fanny and Dolly and Molly and Joan will preen and coo when told, "there is a soul-uplifting quality about lipstick and rouge, and a *spiritual* calm and poise that comes from the knowledge of being well-dressed."

And then—the tender archness of a look, a word to the ladies:

"When there is nothing in the immediate foreground on which you can rest your feet, you can always curl up your legs on a sofa. You never look more charming than when you are in that attitude."

Well! I have known others insinuate themselves on tiger-skins in front of a glowing hearth, and it seemed to me that they never looked more natural.

Mr. Lin is essentially a pedlar in half-truths appealing to our sense of vanity, our desire for ease and a good time, in contrast with our Agag of a conscience that would walk delicately to its doom, and our longing for a better state of things. He prescribes mother earth's soothing syrup for all our ills. He names his dishes with some of the greatest names in Chinese literature and ladles over them a strange sauce of his casual experiences—"A Soochow boat-woman with her profuse use of expletives; a Shanghai street car conductor; my cook's wife; a lion cub at the zoo; a

squirrel in Central Park, New York," etc., etc. He is the most plausible beggar of eternal questions, most persistent flyer off at any tangent, most consummate drawer of red herrings across the human trail of our time. Since his ideal of the perfect man is the old rogue, the brilliant scamp, " a very unruly and awkward adolescent, thinking himself greater and wiser than he really is," we may see in this tall slim subtle-tongued conversationalist the very incarnation of his own ideal. Only he is never awkward but always glib and self-possessed. And if agreeable conversation, chiefly directed to American women over the heads of their " efficient, punctual, and achievement-goaded " males can make a nice new world, fit for heroines to live in, Mr. Lin shall be their Plato. What balm exudes from this easy gospel of lolling, idling, and loitering, these meandering menus of the happy voluptuary! And should the Utopia of his digestive dreams require a name may we not call it *Lollipot?*

It is a pity that none of his English critics have been quickened by a sense of humour in their solemn perigrinations round this soft-padded agile humorist. No tom-cat ever trod the crumbling tiles of Imperial pleasure-houses more warily, or serenaded the twinkling lights of new York sky-scrapers with such fine, careless nonchalance. His dulcet tones have caused a thousand lattices to shake throughout cosmopolis. He brushes by your chair; put out your hand to stroke him and he is on the window-sill; stir and he is gone.

" I have always helped my hosts and hostesses by putting a leg up on the top of a tea-table or whatever happens to be the nearest object, and in that way forced everybody else to throw away the cloak of false dignity."

Yet it is not the leg he puts on the table, but the leg he so slyly pulls beneath it that matters. Rub the magic mirror of things-as-they-really-are and you will see him through the red-lit ritual of some temple of Epicurus *vis-à-vis* with Signor Daniele Varé, smiling philosopher and laughing diplomat bowing and waving to each other over the savoury brew of life. Together they are concocting their

little Barmecide feasts for empty stomachs. Trifling and truffling on through the bill of fare they go till the hour of reckoning overtake them, and they drown in a flood of gastric juices deprived of their normal function. Man cannot live by bread alone, but neither can he live by *hors-d'œuvres* and *vols au vent* however cunningly prepared. The nemesis of the never-fed awaits Mr. Lin. To the artist who would build the house of life on a spiritual foundation he offers nothing but a mocking arch, the vanishing rainbow of evanescence.

"This sense of life's evanescence is back of all Chinese poetry, as well as of a good part of Western poetry—the feeling that life, is essentially but a dream, while we row, row our boat down the river in the sunset of a beautiful afternoon, that flowers cannot bloom for ever, the moon waxes and wanes, and human life itself joins the eternal procession of the plant and animal worlds in being born growing to maturity, and dying to make room for others."

It has all been said before by the Solomons and sages of the ancient world. And like everything else between his pages it has the illusive glamour of half-truth. Every poet worth his bowl of rice and laurel has felt it and expressed it. In Japan it is beautifully called *The Ahness of Things*. But those who are content to dwell within the five little doors of the five little senses and never look out or venture beyond, who meekly accept the narrowing circle of their fate are not poets but cooks and medicine-men preparing the fungus of a false immortality for dupes and fools. For the human race is not immortal. It will die like the masterdon and pterodactyl, and all that lingered in racial memory—Shakespeare, Dante, Homer and Lin Yutang will die with it; man is divine because he is discontented, because he alone shares in the shattering, remaking and remoulding spirit of the universe. And the poet is one who shatters and remakes himself in every song, "who dies to self, and is to Self reborn."

This is the way of Lao Tzŭ and his disciples. We grope blindly in this or that direction, seeking to follow with Mr. Lin the line of least resistance. Then, as we become increasingly conscious of self-development, self

becomes our God, and the very centre of our being. We are no longer the little pattern makers but the Supreme Designer who includes all pattern in Himself. But life-experience cuts across each wavering scrawl, blots out each boastful line and in the bitterness of failure and confusion we stay the disappointed loom and begin to listen to a voice proclaiming " Lo ! I make all things new."

Not Confucius nor Lao Tzŭ but a fat blue-bottle called Yang Chu is the exemplar and master of Mr. Lin Yutang. How he came to be embedded in the amber of great men is another story.

And there are simple coolies and humble soldiers of the Eighth Route Army in North Shensi and Kansu and in Shansi and Hopei who are better builders and truer philosophers of the Eternal Way of Tao than this charming by-blow of Chinese sophistry and American journalism. Between fluidity and fluency lies the Gobi desert of lost souls. Fluidity is life in full spate, fluency its shallow imitation. One widens towards a viewless goal, the other chatters into sand and silence.

L. CRANMER BYNG.

ENGLISH RIVER

(The Cherwell at Oxford)

WILLOWS dip their fingers in this cool stream,
Where swans' breasts curve, quiet as slumber
When no dreams riot in the chambers of the mind.
Smoothly trill the ripples to the thrust of poles
Sending long craft onward like the floating of shadows.
They stir the roof gently of river-woven grasses
Bent beneath the surface, arching amber pools,
Where dark shapes linger fins like the water.
Meadows have their feet here, and stars one by one
Descend to bathe in this still river.
Clouds leave their rose, and mist comes quietly,
Spreading pale tresses to the stems of far trees,
Whose tall heads crown the lucent horizon.
Light lingers long in this cool brown river,
And thought folds its wings on these lambent waters,
Poised as space, as the notes of a song,
Or a star complete in God.

Philadelphia. HARRIET PLIMPTON.

DANTE AT HOME AND ABROAD

A CONSIDERATION of the English version by Laurence Binyon of Dante's *Purgatorio* which has just been published by Macmillan brings to mind the question as to why translations of classical poetry are regarded as suitable additions to the sea of literature. The temptation to translate a favourite author is a strong one, as by that very process one's knowledge of him is inevitably deepened. The value of the translation for others will depend upon the extent to which it fills the gap left by their ignorance of the original.

In the case of a major work like the *Divina Commedia* the gap is a very large one and no translation can do more than fill it in part. As regards the matter, that is the actual meaning, the philosophy, the historical import of the work, a translation can cover most if not all of the ground, and for this purpose a prose translation is adequate; indeed, is preferable as it allows greater fidelity to the original. It is when we come to the manner, to the qualities of music and subtle atmosphere which made the original a poem, it is then that the real difficulties begin. For even if we have an English poet who is capable of suggesting in a small degree the music which Dante so easily commands, how is he to do this and at the same time render the matter with reasonable closeness? As well try to kill two eagles with one toy catapault.

If, then, this attempt must be accounted another failure, it is only because the impossible has been attempted. Indeed, in this case the translator has avowedly essayed the harder of the two tasks and the less useful one: his aim, we read, "has been less to achieve a literal fidelity to the text than to communicate something of Dante's tone and spirit through the rhythm and movement of the verse."

Mr. Binyon has made his task harder by attempting full *terza rima*, a medium much less suited to English verse than to Italian. Our rhymes are less plentiful, and the sense of strain for rhyme is evident all through this long flight.

See, in consequence, how we have to maltreat one of Dante's loveliest lines :

" Ricordite di me che son la Pia,"

which becomes

" Remember me, who am la Pia, then."

Why " then " ? The beauty of the line is its soft and even flight to the word " Pia ". In English it should be surely

" Call me to mind again, who am la Pia."

But the word " then," so weak and unnecessary, was forced by the urgency of rhyme, and the line ruined.

It is unnecessary to multiply examples of this frequently-recurring misfortune. Apart from this difficulty, the translator's command of the musical resources of the decasyllabic line seems by no means adequate. A spondee in the third foot following two weak syllables as in the line,

" From head to the foot-soles began to ply "

must be regarded as an experiment more daring than successful.

Dante opens Canto XI with a version of the Lord's Prayer of which we need say nothing but that it is fit to stand beside the original. But what are we to say of English lines like

" May upon us thy kingdom's peace alight "

for " Thy kingdom come " ; or

" Try not our will, so easy to subdue,
With the old adversary, and by thine aid
Save us from him who goads it, to our rue."

for " Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil " ? Even " but " for " and " would have improved it.

We still recommend those who want to read Dante to learn Italian. It's worth it. Or failing that, to use a prose translation.

The Italians are luckier : they don't have to translate, but merely to comment, which they do year by year with ever-increasing fecundity. The Dante literature must rival even that of Shakespeare ; and it is an eloquent testimony

to the richness of the mine that after so many years it still yields abundant material for discussion. Major problems like that of the Veltro and the DXV will in all probability never be completely resolved; and there are minor problems innumerable; such for instance as the reasons which caused Dante to choose Vergil in particular as his guide through Hell and Purgatory. This particular problem is admirably treated once more in a monograph by C. G. Paluzzi which has just been published by Olschki in Florence. He gives an adequate recension of opinions on this subject to date and concludes, rightly we think, that not one reason but many were operative in Dante's mind in making this particular choice; that Vergil typifies in one person Rome, regarded as the Empire and the seat of temporal power, and also the natural reasoning intelligence in man, without which he is blind, lost in " la selva oscura," but with the aid of which he can go only so far. To complete his illumination the light of God, typified by Beatrice, must come. This is why he is both "Maestro" and "Duca", standing for *action*, as Beatrice stands for *contemplation*. His symbol is the Eagle of Rome as her symbol is the Cross of Christ; but we must remember that he is acting under the direct instructions of Beatrice. The highest function of intelligence is to open the door to illumination; the Eagle is but the servant of the Cross.

T. WESTON RAMSEY.

Miss Elizabeth Virginia Raplee, Broadway, New York, in renewing her membership subscription, writes:

> I cannot speak too highly of the Review, and only wish that it were published every month. It is doing a splendid service for poetry, which in our time stands in great need of such service. The scholarly articles by H. T. Hunt Grubb are of great interest, and I always enjoy those by S. W. Powell, Ronald Fuller, Dallas Kenmare, E. V. Fleming and T. W. Ramsey, to name a few of the magazine's valued contributors. Time does not permit individual mention of the very interesting and often beautiful poems; I can only say that in no other publication have I found such worthy examples of the poetic art. Let me again send my heartiest wishes for the continued success of the Society and the Review.

THIS FREEDOM

IT will have been noticed that more than one of this autumn's new anthologies has been compiled upon a novel basis. Mr. John Mulgan in his *Poems of Freedom* (Gollancz, 3s. 6d.), has made a selection of English poems, from Langland to the present day, which purports to be, in the words of the ubiquitous Mr. W. H. Auden, who here crops up again, and furnishes a brief preface,

"a record of what people in many different social positions, from a peer like Lord Byron to a poor priest like Langland, and in many different Englands, from Wat Tyler's to Stephen Spender's, have noticed and felt about oppression."

There is, of course, much great poetry in the book, and the poems thrown up by the struggles of the middle part of the nineteenth century are of historic interest. One might have expected to find among poems of Freedom Tennyson's praise of England as the land in which

"A man may think the thing he will,"

and

"Where Freedom broadens slowly down
From precedent to precedent."

Also one might have looked for Swinburne's splendid lines with which a few years ago, at a time of crisis, a great Socialist statesman electrified the House of Commons:

"All our past proclaims our future, Shakespeare's voice and Nelson's hand,
Milton's trust and Wordsworth's faith in this our chosen, chainless land.
Come the whole world against her, England yet shall stand."

Perhaps such lines do not sound the note the editor wishes us to hear. For, whether deliberately, or under compulsion, he has blotted his book by giving it, as a sort of colophon, a few pages of common-place ranting by writers whose admiring gaze is fixed on Moscow. Remembering Wordsworth's lines on the early days of the French Revolution

"Bliss was it in that Dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very Heaven,"

one can easily understand how the great Russian experiment of twenty years ago in a land of traditional tyranny must have fired many an eager, generous young soul.

This sympathy might have been expected to give birth to fine, even great poetry. Mr. Mulgan's examples are not of that order. And, of course, it is idle to pretend that the England of to-day, when even the humblest man and woman have a free and equal voice in choosing the makers of the laws which regulate our daily lives, law-makers who may themselves be poor men or women, is not very different from, say, the England of Shelley, where boys and girls were hanged for petty offences, or from the England which Mrs. Browning stirred by "The cry of the children" to abolish the hideous slavery of little children in factories. Inequities still exist, but the soil from which great poems of fierce, rebellious resentment might spring has been blown away. True, we still have with us a few whose softness of heart is apt to spread to their heads. But those who, after the revelations by former fanatics now disillusioned, (in the words of Holy Writ, "the devils also believe and tremble"), of the truth about Russia can still desire the Bolshevising of England, must be either mentally incapable of learning, or must be suspected of cherishing secret ambitions to see themselves girt with the power and arrayed in the glory of a Commissary, lording over his fellows.

But that there are such Mr. Mulgan's book shows. He has actually, incredible as it may seem, included between covers which contain some of the noblest poetry of Milton and Wordsworth a "poem" part of which was quoted on p. 329 of the July-August 1937, issue of THE POETRY REVIEW. It contains such memorable lines as these:

> "No more shall men take pride in paper or gold,
> In furs in cars in servants in spoons in knives,
> But they shall love instead their friends and their wives."

(Note that it is not quite clear whether, in the Coming Dawn, men are to love their own wives, notoriously rather a bourgeois trick, or the wives of their friends. The claim of "freedom" has sometimes included a claim for free-love.) The prophet proceeds:

> "Go away then
> you fat man.
> You don't want your watch-chain.
> But don't interfere with us, because we know you too well.

If you do that you will lose your top hat
And be knocked on the head until you are dead."

(Note here how the sudden deviation into rhyme has a strikingly artistic effect of sinister menace.)

Then follows an adulation of the Hammer and the Sickle, but not, strange to say, of the Swastika, which seems to have produced not very dissimilar happiness.

Well, well. *Semel insanivimus omnes*, as Horace says. But some people seem to be able to keep it up.

EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

AN ODE TO A TIMEPIECE CUCKOO

FROM high upon my kitchen wall
I hear you call,
Your tales and imagery of word
Are daily heard,
And I observe with inward eyes
Your presumed flights to Southern skies.

You lead me to the springing flowers
And waking bowers,
March brings fair April lambs to play
I hear you say,
You carol that earth's faery queen
Has donned her newest gown of green.

Throughout the crowning of the year
Your voice I hear,
Your murmur not when leaves are brown
And tumble down,
And fearless of the close embrace
You kiss the winter's hoary face.

Slowly your hands unfold for me
Life's mystery,
The beating of your heart is time
Measured by chime,
Each beat may cruelly divide—
Or bid my darling to my side.

You mark my years by simple tricks,
By tocks and ticks,
The sorrows that have marred the day
You lock away,
And open wide to-morrow's door
Through which no man has passed before.

JESSIE B. HEARD.

CROWNED

I

THE night without you yields a depth profound,
Beyond the void that longing thought may measure ;
Your presence was the key to all pure pleasure,
Your absence rends the melody from sound :
Yet I endure time's anguish, free, or bound,
Toiling, or dreaming through an endless leisure,
Guarding my heart's inalienable treasure—
The certainty that love is somewhere crowned.

It may be that the night will never show
Another star, nor shall the moon arise ;
The dark may still be dark when I must go
Out through the greater dark behind the skies,
Into that light where faithful hope shall know
The joy foreshadowed in another's eyes.

II

Would word or silence cause the keener pain ?
Need there a single sound be heard to tell
The inmost truth of all you know so well,
The lack of touch that makes the spirit's gain ?
I have no plea to urge ; I give no rein
To passion's clamour, nor would open hell
For that which is divine. We may not dwell
On earthly longing, lest our joy should wane.

Into your stronger hand I have resigned
All that concerns our common life, our loss
Of mutual sight and interchange of mind ;
You will embalm for both all but the dross,
While to mortality we must be blind,
Bearing with dignity a lonely cross.

III

Love sleeps beyond the restless tide of sense,
Crowned with the thornless roses we have dreamed ;
His raiment, grief-stained once, is now redeemed
To whiteness past conception. Let us hence
In some unearthly craft, our confidence
Firm in the star that through the night has gleamed,
To show the limit of the void that seemed
Of endless breadth in time's omnipotence.

There is no barrier; our shores are one;
The tide has vanished in a single breath;
The battle of mortality is done
When the immortal spans the gulf of death:
To whoso overcometh there is none
That shall deny him Heaven, the angel saith. IËRNE ORMSBY.

ADAM AND LILITH

AH! when he found her,
Breath of the oleander rose around her,
And cedars wavered
Uncertain how to shield a head so favoured,
Her hair so clustered
That cirrus clouds grew timorous and flustered,
And a light brook
Its trivial volume for a sea mistook.

Lilith lay fair
On a green mound of youthful maidenhair,
Her eyes closed fast
Yet held half-hearted sleep that could not last,
Her face half hidden
Lay flushed and shy as to the couch unbidden,
And round her shone
Scarlet anemone and campion.

There was no snare
Of smooth-tongued snake, no mischief everywhere,
The sky soft-lain,
No thunder boded and no hurricane,
Indolent lizards
All careless lay unfearing frosts or blizzards,
The forest brood
Lived peaceably in a calm interlude.

Peace brooded, yet
Peril had caught them in a closing net,
He had not seen
Until that hour the beauty of his queen,
She, swift of limb,
Flying, had but half contemplated him,
Now the sun, loth
To choose the fairer, glorifies them both!

I. SUTHERLAND GROOM.

TO A FRIEND

On Receiving the Gift of a Heart-shaped Stone Picked up on a Highland Beach

I DROPPED my heart in the deepest depths of the sea,
Because it was little and proud and sad and sore,
And then one day my heart returned to me;
I found it as I walked on the sea-shore;
A heart-shaped like a stone, cast up by the sea,
Just as it was a million years before.
It hangs round my neck like a stone; I shall never be free.
My heart has returned; I shall be free no more.

Margaret Sackville.

AFTER

AND after the glare of torches, men's hot breath,
The wrangling rising fury loosed with a roar
Against the stainless Cliff—
Riot . . .
Then sentence of death.

The fainting journey;
Confusion of oaths, blows, banners,
Then on the dust-grimed hill
Halt, preparation, until
In screams from the tortured the hammers
Drove in their murderous will.
And after the jeering, tramp of armed feet grew dim,
Desert of thirst receded,
Darkness for him.
The passionless herbs embraced him, the cool of sheet;
Austerity of stone
Received torn flesh and bone.

Turn away to the north,
The spring-veined windy uplands,
Turn, wounded feet.
Away from the city's heat,
Ravening Judah robbed of his prey;
From tawny table lands
Turn away.
On the smooth-sloping hill
Buoyant with daffodil,
He walked again
Rinsed of a world-borne pain.
By the white-pebbled lake,
Fisherman for their sake,
They saw him.

Brenda F. Skene.

THE LAMENT OF BRANWEN.

(*Suggested by an old Welsh story from the Mabinogion*)

SOUL of wild waters, sing afar my grief,
Till seals come up from chasm and lonely reef . . .

Two things have worked to this end—a kinsman's deed
(Hot-headed insult with a bitter seed)
And a carrier starling's flight across the main . . .
'Twas then I should have burst my heart with pain,
Ere sped those wings the coward plea for aid.
But I, the child of Llyr, a kitchen maid,
To cook in scorn where I was once a queen,
With blows upon me where a crown had been!

Yet was't my weakness, and another's sin,
That doomed my life to lose whate'er it win—
Lord, brother, son—or Fate that maketh fair,
Then blights with envy what she helped to bear?
For fair I am—e'en yet my glance might own
(Were death not near) the fires that lit a throne . . .

But never more, o never, never again . . .
Bendigeid Vran, my brother, strange, half-slain,
I shall not stand in Harlech where thou wast king,
Or spin in the sun while the birds of Rhiannon sing. . . .
Is it Ireland, home of my lord, that broods in the sea
For two fair homes destroyed because of me?
. . . And thou, green Isle of the Mighty, Island of Love,
On the harp of thy mists and winds my song shall move.
Though I share no more the dream that pearls thy dawn,
Nor yearn with thy yearning soul when the moon is born—
When Spring shall flower in glens where I loved to be,
Let the voice of thy hills grow deep to remember me . . .

I feel the ice as of winter rise and swell
And numb upon my lips the word Farewell . . .
For me thou hast bled, but for thee . . . O heart . . . I die . . .

(*And the Island shivered and wept at the waters' cry.*)

MELFIN W. JONES

May I congratulate the Society on the glorious poem by "Cloud-rider" in the current number of THE POETRY REVIEW?—IËRNE ORMSBY, Thurgoland, 12.11.38.

SPAN-FOOT VERSE

I. Flick-Stroke (, —)

In The Poetry Review for September 1938 I set forth the main facts concerning Span Verse, so here there is no need to repeat them. It may be convenient, however, to recapitulate them, and to say that Span-Foot Verse is a method of keeping Spans of Thought and Feet of Sound " in step " with each other, so that the rhythm may run without crossdraw of Sense and Sound.

It is well to keep in mind that this method is used as a *means* to an end,—that of a more complete fusion of thought and expression than has hitherto been attained in English Verse. As a method it may be compared with that of " Scales and Exercises " to ensure a greater degree of technical facility in expression for a musician.

Hence " Span-Foot " method aims at developing the subtle correlations between ear and tongue, so that they will respond the more readily and the more accurately to calls upon them. It suggests a consideration of basic principles concerned in these correlations, and practical exercises for both organs with a view to development.

Here it should be noted that during the early exercises in such training any variations from the norm are best avoided; but during the later stages such variations will inevitably come in, often with great advantage.

Although there are dozens of Measures, or Line Patterns, in which our verse could readily be expressed, more than nine-tenths of it has so far been expressed in only five of these; and the greater part of this in Flick-Stroke (, —). Two of these are in Two-Time: Flick-Stroke, and Stroke-Flick; three are in Three Time: Flick-Flick-Stroke, Flick-Stroke-Flick, and Stroke-Flick-Flick. Of these Five Measures, the three that begin with a Flick are very much easier forms for composition than those which begin with a Stroke, for reasons which will appear as we consider each case.

Flick-Stroke is by far the most common as it is the most frequent rhythm in our conversation. It is the most primitive element of all our rhythms; and, ages before it was used by men, it was the basic rhythm for the speech sounds of frogs (crĕ-crāw), donkeys, (hĕ-hāw), dogs, (bă-wōw), etc. It may be noticed in other manifestations of movement, in the draw-thrust of a saw, in the push-pull of the oar, in the din-dong of the light and heavy hammers on the anvil, in the ti-tock of the clock, in the trot of the horse, etc. In each case there is a light sound followed by a heavy one; and the heavy stroke has more strength, length, tone, and signification than the light flick.

So this universal rhythm has been used by all our poets, to such an extent that it has become the hackney vehicle for the expression of almost every manifestation of feeling, thought, and will; for births, marriages, deaths, and so on. Hence its subtler points have become blunted through misuse; and it is high time for our rising poets to develop other *Measures* for Expression.

Yet even so, Flick-Stroke has still undeveloped possibilities of more complete fusion of Sense and Sound, for our poets have not taken full advantage of the part it plays in the rhythms of our common speech. A little enquiry will show us that the simplest and at the same time the most expressive combinations of our key words are mainly *flick-stroke*, and that therefore these give us the greatest possibilities of an ideal expression of Sense-and-Sound in verse. A glance at a few types of many thousands of such key combinations will serve to illustrate their advantage:

The basic combinations are naturally monosyllabic:

1. Article with noun or adjective:
   a book; an inch; the good; the more.
2. Infinitive:
   to feel; to think; to act; to love.
3. Auxiliary and verb:
   have seen; is told; will find; shall write.
4. Preposition and noun or adjective:
   in town; at least; for good; on sale.
5. Pronoun (unstressed) and verb:
   he said; they come; who fought; that seem.
6. Possessive (unstressed) and possessed:
   my home; your hopes; his fields; her head.
7. Connective and connected:
   and streams; or these; if not; but now.

etc. But in addition to these there are numerous dissyllables with stress on the second syllable:

afraid; desire; attain; below.

The simplest *Variations* from such norms are those concerned with *Linked Feet*, of four syllables, where the accents should fall on the even syllables. If these variations are quadrisyllables, then *forcing* tactics have to be used to give the fourth syllable (which as a rule is a flick) the status of a stroke, and so warp its pronunciation; as in the following examples:

decidedly, affiliate, primordial, notorious,

But if the four syllables form two or more words, then forcing tactics may or may not be necessary:

an antidote, to overdraw, will suffer it, in principle.

If the linked feet involve six syllables, forcing an even syllable (if a flick) into a stroke may again become necessary to preserve the rhythm; and so on with more than six syllables of linked feet:

he advertises policies; the murmur of the multitude.

A more complex Variation arises from the tendency of all English poems to slip more or less frequently from any Dominant Rhythm into another, mainly through difficulties of vocabulary; as we shall find in considering each Dominant in turn. But in the case of a Dominant Flick-Stroke the difficulties are fewer, and the Variations from this

cause are far fewer than in those Dominants which have a Stroke for the odd syllables, i.e. (— ,) and (— , ,). Very seldom do we find such a complete turnover as in the hymn :

From Green : land's ic : y mount : ains.

Obviously Sense and Sound crossdraw, because the run of the rhythm is not Flick-Stroke but Stroke-Flick, with a " grace-flick " to open :

(From) Greenland's : icy : mountains.

We are now able to proceed towards actual examples of Span-Foot Verse of the Flick-Stroke type ; and these are printed with the Span-Feet separated for convenience of study, also without punctuation marks as being unnecessary.

I Saw / the Leaves.

I heard	the leaves	astir	above	the trees
There fell	upon	my ears	the hum	of bees
And then	I felt	around	the sighs	of streams
The mood	of birds	that sang	of thought	as dreams
And thus	I came	to stay	and rest	awhile
For stings	and sores	of Doubt	to heal	and smile
And when	at peace	I rose	and went	away
I felt	that Faith	had come	with me	to stay.

To Steal / a Pin.

To steal	a pin	will count	a sin
With some	who fail	to steal	(it)
With whom	the law	of tooth	and claw
Is " Sin	if chance	conceal	(it) "

W. H. Stephens.

Mr. Stephen Spender criticizing the Mass Observation stunt asks: Do any number of " scientific " statistics about fried fish shops prove that poets, in concerning themselves with such problems as death and the will of contemporary men to kill or be killed, are " unrealistic " ? Surely the poets take a longer and wider view, longer because they are concerned with the history of Western Civilization, wider because the interests of their culture extend over the whole world. If you take a period of thirty years, say from 1914 to 1944, and ask whether the odds are in favour of a majority of Europeans during this period being alive or dead, surely mass-observable statistics would prove that the odds are overwhelmingly in favour of death and probably a violent one for most people.

Miss I. P. Turner, Glasgow : I continue to find The Poetry Review a source of constant interest and pleasure.

FIVE WOMEN POETS

HERE is a sign of the times worth noting. The same autumn month of this year (how long is that after the publication of *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*?) has brought together upon a reviewer's table five books of verse in which there is none of that writing which an Oxford Professor of Poetry has described as a species of writer's shorthand, the reading of which constitutes a kind of research; that is, an exercise of the intelligence that is a training and an education for it, even when no very remarkable discoveries are made by the researcher. All these ladies compose in regularly metrical lines, most of them rhymed, and their thought, as will be seen in all the cited passages that follow, far from being a witch's dance of unintelligibility, is as straightforward and as easy to follow as any well-articulated prose. There is far more than just that to be found in Miss V. Sackville-West's *Solitude* (The Hogarth Press, 5s.); there is haunting beauty and passion and earth's wisdom. Take these:

> The night remains our mistress and our mother
> Since, sons of daylight in our common round,
> Between a dusk and dawn we were begotten
> And with the dusk to our clear selves return,
> The alien language of the day forgotten
> That we as foreigners were forced to learn.
> * * * * *
> And still the dead outnumber far the living,
> And still the living yield to the unborn,
> And earth's a graveyard trod by the forgiving
> Forgetful band of those who reap the corn,

The Lowland Venus of Stella Gibbons (Longmans, Green, 3s. 6d.) begins with a poem entitled *On Memory*, dated 1932–1938, and having for its finely effective close:,

> . . . when all the stars are dead,
> Hidden behind the drifting star-mote sheet,
> When final snowstorms bury palaces
> And men creep down within steel cliffs for heat
> But cannot cheat the old,
> Returned and creeping cold—
> Then Memory shall unlock her doorway dim and sweet
> And wait within the Last Man's freezing brain
> While all Man's story closes like a flower,
> Faithfully garnering his final pain,
> With Courage, Godhead, Beauty, in their hour;
> And for the final time
> His soul shall hear the bell of sorrow chime
> And know the light of freshness and the calming power.
> No more, ah, nevermore
> (Slow tolls the bell across the slowly darkening floor)

No more the harvest fine
Shall wreathe the goddess dreaming in the shrine.
Within that frost-furred skull, in silence past
All silences, in endless night, she sleeps at last.

In a poem in Miss Phyllis Hartnoll's *Maid's Song* (Macmillan, 3s. 6d.) *On Reading My Contemporaries*, the winner of the Newdigate in 1929 brings that sign of the times with which this review began to the point of plain speech, saying :

I admire their swiftness, their dexterity,
Their sudden, unexpected word
And sharp phrase,
They are not deceived by rosy flesh or petal softness,
They see the structure of beauty—
The skeleton under the skin—
And they know that the end is death.
They are as stark as the machines they sing of,
As swept and garnished, and as inhuman,
There is nothing in them of primitive man,
With his tangled, secret jungles
And his crowded, fearful, taboo-ridden mind,
I am nearer to that noble savage,
With my love of regular beat and repeated rhyme
And easily memorized jingles,
And the fetish of words used by generations before me.

An unusual feature of Miss Hartnoll's work is that the " anvil " on which it was beaten out was the theatre. This the first glance at almost any page reveals ; for one reads such as *Hamlet. I. for John Gielgud, Hamlet. II. for Laurence Olivier, Ophelia, for Vivien Leigh.*

Poems by Miss Sheila Wingfield (Cresset Press, 3s. 6d.) is an author's first published work. It comes out already praised by James Stephens, Walter De La Mare, and Yeats (on the dust-cover, the sentences reproduced, presumably, with their writers' consent). The effect of such praise gathered before publication—well, is it not rather to turn down what otherwise would have been the reviewer's praise ? May it come to the distinguished, established author being offered a fee for some " before-publication " commendation ? One likes it not. How little Miss Wingfield's wine needed any such doubtful bush this sonnet shows :

Jordan that feeds from far Mount Hermon's snow,
Thames with its fogs and warehouses and docks,
Dargle whose alders dip on little rocks,
The Nile where heavily felluccas go,
Untroubled Avon in flat watermeadow
Or the mad pacing Rhine of many shocks,
Medway that swings the tackles through the blocks,

Deben now still, but for two boys who row ;
The waters that will storm a city's gate
Or lie in glazing pools above a slope,
Or lessen, or become immoderate :
All these I feel within me and their scope
Carried by veins throughout my whole estate,
So quiet is my face and wild my hope.

Not to praise such work, and all because of some pique, would condemn the reviewer to one does not know what depth of perdition.

As for Miss Greta Rowell's sheaf of verse, the smallest of the five, and because of its size kept to the end, but only because of that, it is sufficient to say of *Poems* (Shakespeare Head Press), that they are as lovely as any of their sisters in this " court " (if one may so speak of a review). The collection adds still another to England's already rich store of poetry about the daffodils :

Drawn by the lure of awakening spring
And yearning for wild woodland ways,
Following their track to the foot of the hills,
Far down by the deep, rushing ghyls
Onward I sped with a song in my heart,
Deep hidden, a hope unfulfilled
Of finding amid those green fronds half uncurled
Where thundered the torrent in spate
Near by the ruined and moss-grown stone wall,
Down past the old five-barred gate,
Inside the copse where the sallows shine white
Little daffodils golden and yellow,
Lifting their sunny-hued orbs to the sky,
Young Spring's crown of glory upraised.

On Miss Rowell's next page there is another poem on the daffodil.

So you see, Messieurs et Mesdames, poetry can still be written by those who believe that beauty and loveliness are among its main concerns.

J. A. Chapman.

The opinions of a number of French writers have been taken on Georges Duhamel's denunciation of the wireless as the enemy of literature, first because people devote to listening to it that part of their leisure which they might otherwise have given to reading, and, second, because it removes the habit and even the capacity for active thinking. Most of them agree with it, although some admit that they can listen to music over the wireless, though not to speech. Paul Claudel believes that the wireless might have been the salvation of poetry, which is essentially a spoken and not a written thing ; but it has been handed over to vulgarity.

A SKELETON JAMES STEPHENS

IT is now upwards of two decades since James Stephens published his first volume of poems *Insurrections*, followed by *The Hill of Vision*, *Songs from the Clay* and others, as well as several books of prose which added considerably to his reputation. In his early poems he displayed a fluency of style with a technique peculiar to himself, and yet there was that note of dissatisfaction expressed by his muse which kindred Irish poets had displayed upon many occasions, both in the past and in later years, chiefly upon nationalistic grounds. Since then he has grown more tolerent in expression and has written lyrics which show great charm and beauty.

He was introduced to the public through George W. Russell (Æ), who often referred to James Stephens when speaking of Irish poetry, and one can trace in several of the latter's poems the influence of Æ in a mystical sense. I also find in the new volume (*Kings and the Moon*, Macmillan) what appears to be the additional influence of Rabindranath Tagore, although it may be a case of coincidence.

Like Yeats the younger poet deals with symbols, and he takes the moon as symbolic of something apart from the world, outside the world, beyond sense and reason. It is love ecstasy—poetic ecstasy perhaps—that large delight beyond all reason, an illusiveness which dazzles the mind and transports it, momentary maybe, to some ethereal land of dreams " above the light of the morning star."

> Pure is cherished in a dream,
> Loneliness in little thought:
> Out of nowhere do they gleam,
> Out of nothing are they wrought.

There is deep philosophy in his poem " Bidding the Moon,"

> Who is not glad
> To look on gold
> Or can be sad
> In lovely green!

The glorious colours of Nature have ever been the reason for the heart to rejoice

> In blue, anew,
> The heart
> Takes thought,
> And thought is told in every part.
>
> In purple
> All of kingliness is seen,
> And who sees such
> Is lover to a queen.

And yet there are greater joys which are not ephemeral behind all tangible things, and the poet bids us to look upon the invisible as love which is above all earthly joy, and "in black look to all light."

This bids the moon to rise,
Brings rest
To all that sees:
Brings bird to nest,
And eyes
To skies,
And all souls to their knees:
And God and Love,
Brings Love and God
To the cherishing of these.

Tagore draws an analogy between Nature and the human heart,—and yet they first appear antithetic,—for in this objective world of ceaseless activity Nature presents the aspects of growth and development. The beautiful and scented flower has had its being in an unbroken chain of causation, and yet its only qualification is beauty, and consequently it has no special function of utility except that of beauty of which it is a perfect expression; and yet it is the embodiment of the same ceaseless activity, but to the heart of man it comes as the herald of a king who delivers the message:

Do you,
From toughest wood
And heavenly dew,
Grow blossoms of all good:
The seed was kind.
Good shall the fruiting be
Of the wise mind,
And of the apple tree.

Its beauty's realization assures man that the flower is from a great lover, and we must not forget that indirectly the loveliest of flowers has a useful purpose, for the honey-bee can gather sweetness from its calyx and its seed will help to replenish the Earth. Man says:

—Come
And give,
And serve
Through all thy days:

And all that time
We live,
I, too,
Will serve,
And give—

Every woman knows
When she doth give,
Not take,
That she doth live,
Not fake:

And knows
—To serve, to give
Is thine—
That only the perfume is the rose,
Only the Queen Bee is divine.

Beauty too, like love, is beyond all reason, and men of coarser clay are of opinion that the pleasure that it brings to the poet's mind is merely

imagination, which unreasonableness has its true symbol the moon, consequently all moonshine!

James Stephens's poetry in the present volume contains a depth of meaning, but as he has adapted a technique which is a skeleton framework of ideas having immense signification to the casual reader it is nothing more than the stringing of words together, and he begins to wonder what the poet is driving at. One newspaper critic has written that the poems are full of emotional equations, leaving a bare mathematical formula O = O; but admits there is music in them, and that they attracted him. There is that music as from a one-stringed instrument, and at times he dazzles, and particularly in the folllowing stanzas, showing how it is only the foolish who endeavour to escape from love:

> No pride hath he who sings of escape from love:
> All songs of escape from love are songs of despair:
> Who so hath gat him away hath got nowhere.
>
> He sings below all that he knows as above:
> He hath no mind for the gentle, heart for the fair:
> No pride hath he who sings of escape from love:
> All songs of escape from love are songs of despair.

Some years ago when I lived in Brussels I discovered upon a bookstall a Continental edition (Tauchnitz) of a work by Maurice Hewlett, which tells most convincingly how hosts of fairies inhabit the parks in the heart of busy London; and as I read it in a small park in sunshine beside a playing fountain, my mind was brought *en rapport* with the mental purview of that distinguished novelist and poet. My thoughts wandered back to London, but not to the city of my normal recollections, it was from a new standpoint, very similar I imagine to the mental attitude taken by Lord Dunsany in his outlook on this material world, (*Mirage Water*, Putnam)

> "My dreams have drunk of the mirage water,
> Where cool and stately the palm trees stand,
> Each of them only Illusion's daughter,
> Born of the desert on endless sand.
>
> "My dreams have drunk of the desert water
> Flashing upward the blaze of day:
> Here I am among the bricks and mortar;
> South of the furthest tents are they.

In the various countries he had lived he seems to have moved at times in a world long since passed away, for he conjures up by the magic of poetry, myth and history in a fourth dimensional plane where space and time co-relate, so that space with time is retrogressive and becomes the past. Thus he wanders in imagination in "From Dream to Dream":

Out of an Emperor's sorrow (for all things done by man
Dwelt once with dreams and fancies) the Taj Mahal began,
And all the gazing thousands pass heedless of the woe
Of Shah Jehan the Emperor, three hundred years ago.

But seen on azure evenings from over Akbar's tomb,
Pale pink on the horizon, across the gathering gloom;
One side a floating shadow, the other side a gleam;
The Taj Mahal at twilight goes home again to dream.

I quote from another, "Agra."

The rosy walls, unguarded, but strong as of old,
Which sheltered dynasties now dust on the air;
The Indian sunsets, lilac and green and gold;
And the little skirl of a pipe from one knows not where.

"These things may fade from me if not written soon."

After some poems of a more or less concrete order he suddenly remembers Pan:

O fauns, I had forgotten. Now again
I do remember, and my spirit shall rise
And fare with you to the deep woods of Spain,
Where the grey cork-trees glimmer and bright skies

Flash through the foliage, and perchance is shown,
Though not himself, yet a swift darkening
That was a shadow, only barely gone,
Of him who is of all strange hooves the King.

There is poetic truth in addition to poetic beauty contained in what I have quoted, and I consider that he has steered his barque adroitly between the Scylla and Charybdis—the prosaic and imitative—although he unconsciously has been drawn into the latter; and what poet is there who can then completely avoid one or more of the outstanding pillars of poetic magnitude or otherwise both past and present? As to the former Scylla, he certainly does evoke imagination to the help of reason, and for that alone he is by no means prosaic, inasmuch that Scylla dissolves into poetic enchantment, and sets our imagination aglow.

In a lighter mood he is equally successful, and I take as an example "On a Tea-Pot of Chun Lung." "The Banker and the Broker," which is certainly original, and recalls the London fairies to my mind, tells how two prosaic men of wealth who are taking a holiday in the country when a fairy cavalcade appears and the unearthly beauty of the princesses terrifies the banker, but

One of the princesses from her moth of white and ochre,
Saddled on a buttercup and riding near the last,
Turned a dewdrop eye to twinkle at the broker,
Just a flashing twinkle as she floated past.

The banker to his bank went home, wearily and wailingly
Totting up the figures and heaping up the gold ;
The broker through the moors for years went roaming unavailingly
Searching for the fairy host, and so grew old.

Lord Dunsany was a friend of the late George W. Russell, Æ, and he pays tribute to his memory in two poems. I quote one :

Now you are gone you seem a visitor,
Something that haunted for a little time
The splendour of the evening, or astir
With bees in blooms of lime ;

Or at the hour when mothers tell old tales
To children, something passing through the gleams
Of cottage windows ; or, on western gales
Riding, a king of dreams ;

Or about hawthorn lingering to greet
The earliest may amongst the blazing green,
Or through the heather travelling to meet
Spirits we have not seen ;

A lovely radiance of a passing star
Upon a sudden journey through the gloaming,
Lighting low Irish hills, and then afar
To its own regions homing.

In the last stanza he takes a passing star as a symbol for Æ who always held the firm belief that he had entered this world once again as a traveller from his home in some far off country, and would return homeward after having, as far as he was able, fulfilled his allotted task.

Charles Graves is not new to the world of poetry, he has already published *The Bamboo Grove*, and some of the poems included in *The Wood of Time and Other Poems* (John Lane) have already appeared in *The Fortnightly Review*, *The Observer*, and other publications. His previous volume received high-praise from the critics, including the late Geo. W. Russell (Æ), who declared that the poetry gave him great pleasure, not only for the craftsmanship, but for "the quality of mind," of which the poet's inborn faculty gave evidence. This new collection would undoubtedly have brought that eminent poet additional pleasure were he alive, as I feel assured of what his verdict would be, for he was a critic into whose literary tastes and quick discernment I had some insight.

Modernists will maintain that the present poet has trodden the same old roads of convention, for there is nothing of that pseudo-poetic style which makes for what its exponents term realism in words and

phrasing, or *vers libre*; and moreover, although he is a lover of French poetry, especially Ronsard, his verse is quite unaffected by the Symbolists, consequently there is no trace of the influence of Mallarmé, or others of similar poetic calibre. He plainly states his frame of mind concerning poetic decadence in his "Ode to Pierre de Ronsard,"

> And long has sweetness from our song
> Been banished, and from life more long
> Have Beauty and Desire been missed;
> O, thou whose lips Amathian lips have kissed,
> Whose heart, as thou hast said
> Shall wander round the world to wake the dead.

He does not appear to possess to any large extent the "divine gifts of idealism and mystic vision," still he writes in his desire for sleep—

> When sorrow hath the heart oppressed
> The gift of dream is kind,
> The sleepy flames of fantasy
> Relume the darkened mind.
>
> For in that land the Hounds of Prey,
> Now lift the baffled pack!
> The light was going from the day,
> The hounds were panting back.

And he remembers

> Though these delights of sleep were dear,
> Yet were they not the best;
> It was her song that took my ear
> And far excelled the rest.

But alas!

> Gone is that song, its sense is lost,
> I have no power to write;
> Its notes within the dark were born
> And died upon the light.

Yet his philosophy is pessimistic, and he confesses to being a pessimist so far as the world is concerned, and yet he finds in dreams a solace, for he has begun to despair of love now almost dead which he had considered immortal love

> Love that we thought an immortality
> Must now like mortals commonly die,

and yet

> Is not love braver than the Phoenix bird
> That rises from her ashes, undeterred
> By place and time? Must therefore strong affection
> Have end at last, and love no resurrection?

But he turns to *Nature's Restorative* which is the Spirit of Nature.

Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist, called it "the vicarious power of God through which His Will is fulfilled in the material world."

> Yes, when love's burnish in this mortal air
> Is dulled, and tarnished are our best desires,
> When foulness clogs the ways we fancied fair,
> When courage falters and ambition tires,
> You, by your might of being, cancel cares,
> The body quickens and the heart aspires.

In his long poem, " The Wood of Time," he carries our imagination back through the centuries to where those border-realms of history, we name the mythical period, are peopled by those lovely creations of primitive thought.

I admire his translations from the French, particularly de Ronsard, for he has not only adhered very closely to the originals, but has at the same time retained to a large extent their style and beauty. He gives us proof of his versatility in " The Bull Fight," which is a reminiscence of what he himself had witnessed in Spain, and "Miners" also appears to have been written from an actual experience. I have been informed that Charles Graves is a grandson of a former Bishop of Limerick, whose son, A. P. Graves (who died in 1931).was well known as a writer and author of that famous ballad Father O'Flynn, and his son, Robt. R. Graves, who served in the Great War, is also a poet of distinction.

H. T. Hunt Grubb.

The poet as novelist continues to give excellent examples of his incursions into prose fiction. Mr. Robert Graves follows his success with *I, Claudius* and *Claudius the God* with another circumstantial reconstruction of a picturesque period in *Count Belisarius* (Cassells, 8s. 6d.), the courageous, resourceful cavalry-commander and devout Christian who served most faithfully the feeble emperor Justinian, who did not deserve and rewarded most shamefully the heroic services of his famous general and one-time friend. The narrative is remarkably concise and straightforward—no flamboyancy, although the period of mediæval Constantinople at its richest and most populated would have tempted a less experienced master of English to indulge in less convincing treatment of this closely-packed theme. This is a novel—or, rather, a history—with a present-day significance, for Belisarius is shown as conducting his many campaigns on the most humane principles of warfare, in the Dark Ages never terrorizing a civil population, resolutely avoiding pitched battles whenever the same advantages could be achieved by forced marches, the cutting of communications or digging-in, and never pushing a defeated enemy to desperation.

Sylvia Townsend Warner now offers more prose than verse, but the poet remains in the theme and treatment of her incisive, ironic, pitiful

continuation of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, *After the Death of Don Juan* (Chatto and Windus, 7s. 6d.) which deserves a place with supplementary Byronic literature.

Mr. Gwyn Jones, after his closely-packed reconstruction of Richard Savage and his period, now offers, in *Garland of Bays* (Gollancz, 10s. 6d.), a similar dexterous, precise, detailed presentation of the tumultuous, ineffective life of Robert Green. As in the previous novel, the famous contemporaries of the poet, including Shakespeare and Marlowe, are definitely characterized in a work that would pass for a piece of brilliant biography. Particularly vivid is the narrative of Green's travels and escapades in Italy.

Mr. Norman Ault, who was responsible for those good volumes *Elizabethan Lyrics* and *Seventeenth-Century Lyrics*, has had the happy idea of compiling an anthology rather different from all others, *A Treasury of Unfamiliar Lyrics*. It is a book mostly of poems gathered by him in fields rarely visited or in the by-ways, poems by authors almost unknown or, in some cases, undiscoverable. He has included a few poems which, though the work of famous poets, have never found public favour. This novel anthology forms an enjoyable book, even if now and then a reader will be surprised at meeting an old favourite among the unfamiliars. Thus, the lines from M. Arnold:

> " Eyes too expressive to be blue,
> Too lovely to be grey,"

or those from " In Memoriam ":

> " The little speedwell's darling blue
> Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire,"

and still more, Blanco White's famous sonnet to Night, are hardly flowers that have blushed unseen. But familiar beauties are not blemishes. The volume is published at 7s. 6d. by Gollancz, who and the author are to be congratulated on carrying out well and handsomely an original enterprise. The book should become something of a classic.

Mr. R. De la Bère, an instructor at the Royal Air Force College, has, in partnership with three Flight Cadets, compiled an anthology of flight-poems, from Homer to the present time. It looks as though man's conquest of the air has not yet inspired much poetry, though here and there one is arrested by such a poem as Paul Bewsher's fine sonnet telling the feelings of an airman flying amid hostile searchlights. The book (*Icarus*, Macmillan, 7s. 6d.) is handsomely produced and is illustrated by striking photographs.

Potential participants in the Franciscan Pilgrimage to Assisi, &c., in April are invited to write the Editor.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY : LXXVI

The poetry of Mary Sinton Leitch is heralded by such ringing voices as William Lyon Phelps, Max Eastman, John Calvin Metcalf, DuBose Hayward, Jessie Rittenhouse, Robert P. Tristram Coffin, the *Boston Evening Transcript*, the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Richmond Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Post*, *Louisville Post*, etc., etc.

Spider Architect (Putnam's), Mrs. Leitch's first book in eleven years —of poetry—verifies the praise given her. The Leitches live amid wooden acres on the Lynnhaven River, the salt arm of Chesapeake Bay, where their home is a centre for much of the poetry life of the Virginia tidewater.

The opening poem, which titles the book, " Spider Architect," gives us with rare delicacy a bit of the wonder of the universe. The first stanza follows :

> What secret, spider architect,
> Is yours that you can swing
> Across the sky upon a bridge
> Of rainbow raveling ;
> With girders built of gossamer
> Can span this perilous water
> And make of April sun and rain
> Your bricks and your mortar ?

The fragrance of a wander in Scotland we find in " Scent of Heather"

> In wandering down an alien way
> I saw a bunch of heather
> And sudden on a Scottish brae
> I walked in Scottish weather.
>
> The heart—no slave to sluggard heels—
> Has secret means of travel :
> Not always under labouring wheels
> Need the slow miles unravel.
>
> From Perth, Strathmiglo, Earn or Ayr,
> Not hills and seas together
> Can keep Scots hearts, no matter where,
> That feel the scent of heather.

I am confident you will agree with me " Identity " is a fine sonnet :

> Forever we are bondmen to the past.
> Nor flesh nor spirit can we claim our own.
> Seed of our dreams by Angelo was sown—
> And Alexander. Dead hands hold us fast.
> To-day we triumph because David cast
> Against Goliath's shield a conquering stone :
> We fail because some beggar stole a bone,
> Because Napoleon lost his crown at last.

We are the past, each one of us an urn
Wherein the essence of the years is poured.
You bow before Mahomet's shrine and turn
To wash the wounded feet of the risen Lord.
With Socrates I drink the hemlock, burn
With Luther's zeal and die by Caesar's sword.

What If the Spring, by Grace Buchanan Sherwood (Kaleidograph Press, Dallas, Tex.), a fourth volume of poems, includes excellent sonnets and lyrical treatment of passing scenes registering beauty in the mind of the writer. The sea is here in the lyric which follows,

Singing and surging in sunlight,
Breaking in multiple spray ;
Mirror for larkspur of heaven,
Shadowed by purple and grey—
Sown with a pathway of silver,
Wearing reflections of rose ;
Spreading a mystic enchantment—
Yesterday who could suppose
That by to-day all her quiet
Would be caught up in the swell
Of these rapacious, dark billows ;
Shattering loudly the spell
Of her late peace with this tumult,
Wearing a pattern of fear ?
Salt is the sweeping destruction,
Salt was the longed for and dear.

It is favoured by some writers to call the first line of a sonnet the title. Better, I like the way in which Mrs. Sherwood names hers : " Choice "—

Who would be mute by choice, smothered in down
And dulled by plenty to insentiency ;
Seeing the world as monotonely brown,
Drowning in sleep the spells of ecstasy.
Who sink in ease can never know delight—
This stream is nectar, being desert born—
His joy is dimly coloured, frail and slight
Who never traversed wilderness or thorn.

His song had been composed of lovely words,
Their fascination that of coloured shapes ;
But now, from the ensanguined page, rise birds,
By pain released to soaring bright escapes.
Ungrateful to resent the turning knife
That stirs to agony but quickens life.

A paragraph on poetry Mrs. Sherwood sends us :

"There is a direct ratio, I think, between a troubled and materialistic age and the need for pure poetry. Verse that is worthy of the name of poetry should have, I most earnestly believe, if not a definitely constructive contribution toward the solution of present day problems, then at least, something to offer of truth or beauty that shall serve to convey consolation or encouragement to those who take the time to read it. . . . Not the least valuable feature of a thought expressed in verse is, I think, the tendency of a quotable, well turned line to adhere, indefinitely, in the memory; whereas that identical thought, even quite similarly expressed, if set down in prose, may fail entirely to recur to the average mind."

Airman, by Sands-Roux (Mrs. Charles Tatham) (Poets Press, New York), is a collection of sixty-seven sonnets of unusual insight, imagination and intellectual grasp. It is an encouraging fact that the poets are turning with definite determination to the sonnet form. There are a number of such books on my editorial desk. To the disciplined and attuned ear to the Petrarchan form or the Shakespearian there is registered, from time to time, an extra foot here and there—quite unnecessary, and the editor wonders why this indulgence.

Of poetry, Sands-Roux writes :

"I have been asked why I write poetry. At first this question seemed to me too complex for a direct answer, but in thinking of it I find it is really very simple, at least in my case.

"I write because it gives me great pleasure. Perhaps it is the feeling a bird has when it sings ; or a surgeon when he operates. The sensation of being in the right environment.

"And I think poetry should be written, because, although one may only produce a very small flame, yet if a few hearts have been warmed by it, or a mental attitude has been thawed, it has not been wasted ; and if by chance a poem gives one spark, one small suggestion or idea for a greater poem, or beautiful creation of any kind to come in the future, it has indeed been worth while.

"But people say, 'What part can poetry play in the modern life of to-day?' I find it difficult to separate poetry in centuries, of even in decades ; like all creative art it is, of course, a product of its time, as a flower is the product of its season. It cannot be otherwise. But I do not think modern life shuts out poetry any more than any other period has done ; it simply expresses it differently ; undoubtedly sometimes in a brutal idiom, but has not this been true in the past? And must one always use the same materials?

. . . poems are spun
Of finest steel from which all flesh is torn.

Poetry has no century, no period. It is a great fundamental force when it is sincere, otherwise it is nothing."

Sands-Roux, a daughter of E. P. Roe, author of *Barriers Burned Away*, and many other popular novels of the 'eighties, was born at Highland Falls, New York, but has lived a good deal abroad ; she has always written under the name Sands-Roux, Roux being the old French spelling of Roe, and Sands was her mother's maiden name.

The second sonnet of this talented collection follows :

My song is not of earth, nor yet, of sea ;
But of my heritage, the open sky.
The roof of man is far too low for me.
And from the past into the future I
Escape ; the lonely way that none shall curb
Leads not to earth. Only a child, alert
To catch the silences my wings disturb,
May bring to me a little wing that's hurt.
Though rainbow gold lies in a fairy pot,
I shall not seek that path by day ; by night
The Galaxy, starlit, can hold me not.
The open sky is calling me to flight.
I, in the time appointed, late, or soon,
Shall blow the trumpet in the fair new moon.

To-day, perhaps more than any other time, the question of the *use* of wings is uppermost in the minds of us all. That so wonderful an invention should deal destruction is repellent. The outlawing of bombing from the air will be a great step forward in the interest of humanity. The thirteenth sonnet in this collection won first prize in the radio contest conducted over Wins :

Most, I would have the simple things in life—
The flowers and birds, the wine, the wholesome bread,
And have them simply, without haste or strife,
And without envy or the awful dread
Of losing them ; these are the things to share.
Like rain and sunlight, they are meant for all ;
Let none take more than is his due, nor dare
Replace these things with wormwood or with gall.
Though I may live in cities, or in fields,
I thread my dreams on ribbon made of sky ;
And none can pierce the oldest of all shields
That guards my heart, though lighter than a sigh.
When I am old, I'll beg of life no staff
If Love will always share with me his laugh.

Cecille Zenia Lewis's second book, *Tenets, Truth, and Lyrics* (Bruce, Humphries Co.), brings the fulfilling of early promise in her *Facing East*. It is interesting to note how from time to time the minds of the world turn to figures of the past and find inspiration in considering them, as, at the present, it appears that Sappho is walking through the minds of the world ; that part of the mind which is not tortured

with considerations of war. Judas whispered into the ear of Miss Lewis and caused her to write the following :

Sad ages passed since ancient Judas kissed
The cheek of him whose holy bones he caped
For avid silver or for price of gold,
For sandalled foot and for a garment draped—
His holy friend and kin for these he sold,
They say, but if he could his time again,
It were to see he would no sweetness bear,
For in his day he was the sordid man
Who hated all he could not ever share,
And grudged another what himself he missed—
For all this Judas feared was what was sweet,
The good would hate much rather than revere—
Betraying—in betrayal his defeat—
For this we would no more of Judas here.

The seasons are ever beckoning the poet to say again something of their joy and defeat. Miss Lewis's " Autumn "—

The wind blows the shadows,
And blown trees sway—
A vine tendril trembles
Aloft in dismay.

Dust whirlpools swirl,
Leaves patter along—
The chimney-tops whistle
An autumn song.

The wind stirs dark shadows,
A hush rolls out far,
And somewhere there twinkles
A bleak autumn star.

Miss Lewis comments on poetry : " The fount of Poetry is the great mystery of Sadness, Ecstasy and Joy, as enchanting as a moonlit night in June, as frivolous as a bubbling stream in the woods and as deep and powerful as thunder and lightning. It is nature in a chant or religion in a hymn.

" Poetry springs from the heart of nature to dwell in the soul of mankind. As the folk song morally sustains a people in time of stress, poetry opens new vistas and gives greater hope. Poetry is at once the town crier and the soothing balm.

" It is my opinion that genuine poetry has the quality of inspiration ; that deep poetry has the vision of truth and great poetry mirrors life and the soul in images forever true.

" We need poetry as a memory of sunshine in rain. We need poetry as the ennobling medium. We need poetry for a song of strength and courage."

Into Another Spring, by Meredyth G. Whiting (Driftwind Press, Vermont), a delightful first book, carries us into far and near places under the sponsorship of beauty. Mrs. Whiting's answer to my letter, calling for a line about herself, is as follows :

"I am sure that the best thing I can say is that I am married to the marine painter, John D. Whiting; that, to us, our young daughters are remarkable people; that we love books, painting and kittens. Chess and coffee are two of my vices."

Mrs. Whiting continues:

"I do love poetry, the study of it and the creative side of it. In the complexity of a mechanistic age which decries sentiment, I am grateful for the arts, poetry, painting and music, which need not be bizarre or ugly to be vital. Beauty is not obsolete, I think, if one can take a middle ground between sentimentalism and the cult of the obscure."

Mrs. Merdeyth G. Whiting takes us with her in her first stanza of her first poem:

I'd like to walk into another Spring,
Long gone, down a small April lane
Where dogwood trees in twisted ivory
The loveliness of spirial patterns bear.
Ethereal gates, oh will you let me by
To beauty of a memoried yester-year?

And on we go through three more delightful stanzas. The first stanza of the next poem "I Stood Enclosed in Silence":

The snow was all about me, silver-fine,
And I might think that moonlight left the skies
To brush my lips, to cling within my hair
And lay its gossamer across my eyes.

The beauty of England captures all poets. Mrs. Whiting says a word of New England:

They said, "Write of New England, you have told enough
Of other shores, the gloaming of an English lane,
And great moors darkly garnet under passing cloud,
The fragrant shadowed heather you would see again."

I said, "I like the lanes, the heather moors,
And I shall keep remembered beauty long;
But one road through New England's April wood
Is buried in my heart, too deep for song."

The moon-light jacket of this book is a pen-tint by Mrs. Whiting's husband, as are the two illustrations.

The happy absorption of family life and friends have not so crowded the hours of Maude Clark Hough that poetry expressed and published, as well as lived and enjoyed, did not find space. A recent achievement of Mrs. Hough's is the founding of the Associate Arts of Brooklyn, with already a membership of eighty, which bespeaks popularity and organizing ability since it had its inception as recently as in the month of May. She writes me that her poems were the offspring of some

incident—"either my effort to comfort, cheer or stir someone to effort, or to clear my own thought. . . . I think it isn't poetry, but the thought back of these poems bring remarks and letters that make me very happy."

Mrs. Hough is engaged, at this writing, in organizing a chapter of The Poetry Society in Brooklyn, New York. More of this later.

From her poems of Consolation *In Another Living-Room*, we catch a glimpse of her kindly intent and her constant faith: "Compensation"—first stanza—

It's thought, not miles, makes far or near
Concerning those we hold most dear;
It's doubt and wavering faith in good,
That hatches out old error's brood,
And makes the world seem drear!

Where space is coveted, the columns of the *Evening Sun* carried the following poem by Mrs. Hough: "Measure"—

If I should half-way measure up
To what you think I should, my cup
Would be full-overflowing;
But when you take my measure, please
Count in my love for you, and these,
With other things, as showing
Perhaps the most important one
Of all the good things I have done,
Is just that I kept going!

From *Lines of Life*, we gather a lyric called "Words":

Words are birds
That rise to heaven;
Words are yeast
Or life's sky guild.

Words are rocks
Of which to build
A stout hope chest,
Man's hope to leaven.

Words are birds,
They're homing doves,
They carry all
That mankind loves.

At the close of the war a poem of four stanzas, "Youth Dies Not," written by Maude Clark Hough went into several editions in pamphlet form. The proceeds from the sale of this poem were donated to the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teachers Association Service Club for enlisted men.

The presentation of *Disasters of War*, an arresting drama by Leighton Rollins, Director of the Studio of Acting, East Hampton, Long Island, New York, in the Guild Theatre, the gift of Mrs. Lorenzo Woodhouse to the town of East Hampton, created the immediate desire on the part of all who saw it that it should have wide presentation throughout the country.

Mr. John Hall Wheelock reports: "*Disasters of War*, by Leighton Rollins, was presented by the advanced group of young actors in his well-known school, which is becoming well known in England due to the fact that the Embassy School of Acting in London (Eileen Thorndike, director), and the Rollins Studio in East Hampton, award each year an Anglo-American scholarship, called the Thorndike-Woodhouse Fellowship. Mr. Rollins' production, is inspired by, and devised from, the etchings of Francisco de Goya. A musical score was written for the production by Nicholas Goldschmidt, a Czechoslovakian composer, now connected with the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. President Nicholas Murray Butler, of Columbia University, said at the conclusion of the first performance of this production: '*Disasters of War* should be produced not only in every part of this country, but more important, in other countries where the lesson it tells needs grievously to be learned.'"

The enclosing chorus illustrates Goya's etching, which he calls "Con Razon o Sin Ella" (With Reason or Without). It shows on an elevation two desperate peasants, one with a dagger, and the other with a pike-stave, faced by four soldiers with muskets and bayonets. In the background are a group of men and women rioting in terror.

Dagger and pike stave
Raised against the bayonet's fire
Cannot obscure the madness in the heart,
The vomit on the lips,
The intolerable despair,
Which victoriously claims
Creatures moving in the guise of men,
To sudden and malignant slaughter.

The ghosts of fury
Fill the air with laughter
And the sun is darkened ever more.

We give also the first chorus, which is repeated at the conclusion of the production:

Desolate, disillusioned, lost.
The war ended and the road obscured.
No leader with hand upheld
Bends low to move
The festering body of this death.
Lost, we turn upon ourselves
And march around the stricken mulberry bush.
Behold the dawn of a new hope—
Out of the fog it glows:
A corpse.
Desolate, disillusioned, lost.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

Our awards are as follows :—

M. Edgelow, Gerrard's Cross ; Geoffrey Dobbs, London, W.C. ; W. R. Latham, London, E.; Con Harvey, Goodmayes; E. M. Walker, Ripon.

We are particularly glad to welcome Miss Edgelow to our list of Premium winners with a striking and powerful lyric.

Highly Commended :

Vera Arlett, Worthing ;
Lily E. F. Barry, Montreal ;
Peri Black, Roedean ;
Marguerite Evans, Pontypridd ;
I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol ;
Christine Henderson, Montreal :
Marjorie Holben, London, N. ;
N. M. Horton, Burnley ;
Irene M. Lewis, Leatherhead ;
I. M. Mills, London, N. ;
C. Morton, Cwmtillery ;
M. L. Ormsby, Dublin ;
E. Curt Peters, Chalfont-St.-Giles ;
Marguerite Pollard, Oxford ;
M. H. Powell, London, W. ;
Phoebe Rayner, Rivington ;
Bertha M. Skeat, Bexhill ;
H. M. Slade, Ramsgate ;
Arthur Lynnford-Smith, Wanstead ;
Margaret E. Stringer, Tipperary;
Brenda F. Skene, London, W. ;
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth;

Commended :

M. Fancourt Bell, Sevenoaks ;
Langford Budville, Worthing ;
T. E. Casson, Ullswater ;
Cloudrider, Budapest ;
Lettie Cole, Broadway ;
Reginald C. Eva, Hove ;
Hala Jean Hammond, Oklahama ;
Pauline Huthwaite, Hawksworth ;
Jessie B. Heard, Bristol ;
Lawrence W. Hockey, Newport;
Enid W. Mark, Croydon ;
Redcliffe McKie, Hove ;
O.G.M., Helensburgh ;
Petronella O'Donnell, Burnham ;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland ;
T. Pittaway, Frome ;
E. H. Ray, Whitchurch ;
E. M. Storr, Exmouth ;
Ruth Tenney, London, E.C. ;
D. E. C. Tomlin, Scole ;
C. B. Toovey, Welwyn ;
L. R. T., Chingford ;
Phyllis Dulce Warwick, Newark;
Dinah G. Watson, Sunderland ;
Mary E. Wise, Penlan.

The usual premium offer for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should reach " The Premium Editor, The Poetry Review, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1," by February 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.) It is essential that entrants to this competition be

members of The Poetry Society or registered subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW, and that each poem bears the name and address of the author.

An international poetry contest in honour of John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley is announced by the American editor of THE POETRY REVIEW, and Chairman of the International Poetry Congress,—first prize, $50, second $25, third $15, fourth, $10. Competitors are charged a fee of $2.00—which will go for the enlarging of the Poetry Library of the Keats-Shelley Memorial House in Rome. Poems need not necessarily deal with either of these distinguished poets but the subjects chosen must be such as are appropriate for a contest of this distinction, and preferably not too long.

The Keats-Shelley Memorial House is situated in the Piazza de Spagna, on the side of the famous stairway of Trinita dei Monti. It was saved by American initiative. In 1903 Robert Underwood Johnson, the poet who became American Ambassador to Italy, discussed the matter. In 1906 Mr. Johnson was joined by the American poet Edmund Clarence Stedman.

Entries should be addressed to Mrs. Alice Hunt Bartlett, 299 Park Avenue, New York. The contest is open to all. The date of closing is Shelley's birthday—August 4th, 1939. All poets entering this contest will have their names inscribed in a souvenir volume to be kept in the Memorial House in Rome.

The Poetry Society of Georgia again notify us of the following open competitions: $25.00 is offered by Mrs. John Seymour for a poem about the sea or shipping, closing date January 7th, 1939; $25.00 is offered by Mr. Jacob G. Smith for the best poem on any subject, closing date February 15th; $50.00 is offered by Mrs. Craig Barrow for the best poem on any subject, closing date April 15th. All MSS. must be typewritten on one side of the paper only. Positively no MSS. will be returned. All unused MSS. will be destroyed; only one poem by any competitor may be entered for any given prize; the name of the prize for which the poem is submitted must be clearly written on the MSS.; no entry shall be signed; the signature of the author enclosed in a separate envelope, on which is written the title of the entry, must accompany the MSS.; poems must not exceed 100 lines in length; all work submitted must be original; none is eligible which has been previously published, nor can any material be submitted elsewhere pending the decision of the judges; all prize-winning material becomes the property of the Poetry Society of Georgia. All MSS. should be sent to the Chairman, Mr. Sol J. Stern, 217 East 49th Street, Savannah, Georgia, U.S.A.

Our contributor, Dilip K. Roy, who has recently published *Anami*, a collection of Bengali poems and translations from Sanskrit, Urdu,

Hindi, French, German and English, rendered into Bengali verse, and a sheaf of letters written to the writer by some literary men, with an imaginary epistle written by the writer on Bengali Prosody, is the only son of the Bengali poet and dramatist, the late Mr. D. L. Roy, formerly of the Bengal Executive Service. He was a distinguished graduate of Presidency College, Calcutta. He undertook an extensive tour to Europe and took lessons in Western music at the London and Paris Universities. Having returned to India, he undertook another extensive music-tour throughout the length and breadth of this vast peninsula. Belonging as he did to one of the richest and most cultured families of Bengal, he made Calcutta the centre of his musical activities, where his name is even now a household word. Of a highly philosophical and sensitive temperament, Roy was gradually drawn to Sri Aurobindo's Asram at Pondicherry to which he assigned his vast property and income. From within the cloistered seclusion of the Asram he has been cultivating the musical and literary arts like a Benedictine monk of old. He is already known as a lyric poet both in English and Bengali. Though Roy has become an Asramite at a very young age, he does not belong to the modern school of *defaitisme* and despair, and he does not make poetry the proper vehicle for metaphysics.

ANGELA MARCO, SUFFIELD, CONN., writes OF ORDINARY WORDS: Now that Harriet Monroe's exquisite voice is still, one sees, as evidence of her greatness, that she was not more devoted to the free than to the traditional. She was original—she was also patient with time-honoured integrities. "High priestess of the new" still she seems not to have hated a cliché or even a trite rhyme. Simplicity and sincerity are essential to modern poetry—more than "unstereotyped diction, unstereotyped rhythm." Poetry in order to belong in real life has to be "less a matter of rules and formulae and more a matter of the spirit." Great poetry, Miss Monroe declared, "has always been written in the language of contemporary speech, and its theme, even when legendary, has borne a direct relation with contemporary imaginative and spiritual life."

Such reflections strengthen my belief that *Fair Captive* is not untrue to reality though lacking in verbal and other peculiarities designed to lend historical verity. In first planning the poem I charged my characters to think, feel and speak like *myself*, not as my ancestors probably did. They would have been spoiled for me—those characters—if pushed away into an archaic background. The use of language that is alive was intentional.

In a long poem one often becomes conscious of using trite rhymes or commonplace phrases; it seems artificial though, to make a point of strenuously avoiding these. Our conversation is doubtless full of clichés! On the other hand, under stress one uses tremendous words without pose. It is desirable to express one's meaning spontaneously.

Even a certain degree of commonplace may be admissible, I think, in the name of simplicity and sincerity; the guide will be individual taste. It is *artificiality* which should by all means be weeded out of the mind, and this by a progress hardly conscious, the result of experience and honest thinking.

FROM C—N B—S WHO AGREES WITH ARTHUR HOOD BUT——!

" Send us a man " he said
So I wracked my bloody head,
And I beat my bleeding heart,[1]
Intent upon the start
To separate by miles
From Dolly Vardon's smiles.
No more lost love to weep,
No sonnets slung at sleep,
No more my garlands weave
Round Delilahs who deceive ;—
Now a life before the mast
And the stormy wintry blast !
Awake my soul reveal
To man a nobler deal !
But I never got beyond
St. James's placid pond,
Formal flowers in the park,
The soaring of the lark,
And each repetitive pose
As paints anew the rose.
Then I drank my whisky neat
To escape this feeble bleat,
Brought to birth a little Lucy,
But never a Hitler or a Duce !

Moral

Who longs to lead a sheltered life
Must take his shelter for his wife,
And never cast adulterous looks
Beyond the bounds that make his books.
'Tis thus the lesser poet fares
From tinsel wares to tinsel wares.

R. C. THOMAS, author of " A Pageant of Childhood, " Kenya," etc., also expresses her re-action to Arthur Hood in THE SONG BIRDS AND THE POETS :

O lucky birds that year by year
delight the seasons with your songs,

[1] This is a plagiarism from Augustine Birrell who said he wished George Lansbury would not let his bleeding heart run away with his bloody head !

those rustic melodies that can
or banish sadness, summon smiles,
unseal the fount of tears.
And yet your songs are still the same,
note-perfect learned from feathered sires ;
the mellow whistle and the trill,
the quaintly oft-repeated phrase,
that be it sunshine, be it storm,
through summer's heat or winter's snow
are heard to charm and charm anew.
O lucky birds that year by year
sing the same songs, delighting still.

O luckless poets ! should you dare
to sing in like simplicity
of Nature's everlasting themes,
using her lovely imagery ;
be sure derision's lethal tongue
will vouch that none could see or hear
what Wordsworth saw and Shelley heard,
save Wordsworth and save Shelley. So
let no one dare to sing of earth,
nor of the ever-changing sky ;
nor of the lark out-racing dawn
climbing to reach the ether :
a barrier lies across that way ;
where such have conquered, who may tread ?
The sea is Byron's. Masefield too
on that domain has prior claims.
The village Goldsmith dominates
and Cowper's is the friendly hearth ;
the epitome of cosy ease,
his copyright for ever.
Let no one dare to praise this land,
" this dear, dear, land, this England."
or celebrate its royal state,
or bring to life its noble dead.
Shakespeare has made that theme his own ;
how dare you recapitulate ?
No, rather scoff and criticize,
though here, be wary, Bernard Shaw
has rights, a tough competitor
who, scouring Heaven and hell, discerned
scope for sophisticated minds.
Far better may you be advised,
since virtue, courage, beauty, might,
even vice itself have all been sung,

to hasten to some wilderness
where you may sing, if sing you must,
pleasing yourselves, offending none.

O lucky birds! your simple joys,
your gratitude for God's good gifts,
your overflowing happiness,
you utter in the self-same notes
your black or speckled fathers used;
they in their time, by Nature taught,
singing their songs because they must.
What though your songs be still the same,
Go thrill the skies, delight the glade;
and after you may others rise;
lark, nightingale and mistle-thrush
with the same songs to charm anew,
sharing their happiness with us!

We deeply regret to have to record the death and burial in November at Colchester, the home of her son, Major Hilary Hood, of Mrs. A. C. Mends Gibson, widow of Dr. H. C. Mends Gibson, one time an officer of the Ministry of Health, marking the passing of a very active, intellectual spirit, who maintained, with all her Victorian attributes and prejudices, a very strong zest for life and thought.

Mrs. Mends Gibson was a cousin of Francis T. Palgrave, whose taste and preferences in English poetry she warmly supported as a literary critic and an occasional poet, and the strenuous advocate of traditionalism. She was also a novelist of repute, and particularly an authority on the French Revolutionary period, her most notable book being the well-documented *Dragon's Brood*, published by Cassell's a few years ago.

Several dramas by her were produced at the Arts Theatre and the New Century Theatre, the latest being the production at both places for short runs of *The Sin of David*. As "Arthur Hood," which perpetuated the surname of her first husband, a colonial planter, she was one of the most pungent critics of *The New Age*, and afterwards of THE POETRY REVIEW, with which she was associated for above twenty years, and as a member of the Executive Council of The Poetry Society and President of the Kensington Centre she formed one of the "old guard" who have been described as the "old gang," most strenuously resisting what she considered to be the vulgarization and debasement of English poetry by contemporary methods of expression. Like her favourite Browning, she was ever a fighter, as Commander Carlyon Bellairs, ex-President of The Poetry Society, has pointed out "with strong common sense and humour," who could be relied on in all emergencies and difficulties, and whose second name, as another admirer has pointed out, was "Constance."

This staunch friend will be greatly missed from our councils: she

was a wise and understanding colleague, greatly admired for her definite convictions and her unswerving loyalty to The Poetry Society and to those with whom she was associated in its management. The hope was expressed at the presentation made to her by the Kensington Centre in July—a very happy function for which the devoted secretary of the Centre, Miss Barnes, was responsible—that Mrs. Mends Gibson would long be able to continue (as she wished to do) on the General Council, and to contribute, as hitherto, to THE POETRY REVIEW, of which her special articles and reviews had been a recognized feature for so many years. These contributions will constitute the programme of the opening meeting of the new session of the Kensington Centre.

Mr. Guy Pertwee, at the Gold Medal Recital on November 19th, said : " The sense of pitch that afternoon and the audibility and articulation generally were very much better than they have been in the past. There was no question of having to listen to what the candidates were saying. I think you will generally agree that verse-speaking, to be really interesting and artistic, must have good elocution, but I use the word ' elocution ' strictly in its true sense, that is to say, in its technical sense, in the production of the voice. Directly verse-speaking becomes elocutionary it is a perfect nuisance : it is a most awful thing to listen to, and becomes a mere medium for cheap vocal expression. I feel you do want to be very seriously warned about that. To be an interesting verse-speaker you have simply got to be sincere and to maintain a certain simplicity all the way through. Directly you lose that sincerity and simplicity, all the beauty goes to the wall. The technique of elocution is the question of producing the voice, and of fitting that voice-production into the true atmosphere of the poem which you are speaking, and to do that you have got to have a true understanding, real appreciation and love. But never take anything that is a mere medium for vocal expression, because then it becomes worthless, and, after all, poetry was written to be spoken, and all good writers of poetry can hear it in their minds. In the same way that Beethoven, when totally deaf, could hear the music in his mind, so writers of poetry can hear their lines being spoken and hear the music of the lines.

" One little point I want to mention before I start commenting on the performances is this : Do try in your verse-speaking to make your emphasis intellectual and not merely metrical. In one performance only did I really feel that the emphasis was intellectual, grave and thoughtful and gave a sensitive nature to the delivery. As soon as you get that true understanding and true emphatic rendering you get the really finished performance ; otherwise it becomes too ponderous and too obvious. You must avoid being blatantly obvious. It is as if you went into a restaurant and in an airy sort of way ordered a soufflé and the waiter brought you plum pie !

"Make the emphasis intellectual and not merely metrical. If you want to study emphasis really carefully, take Shakespeare's Sonnet No. 18—you will find it beneficial to think it out and concentrate on it."

Mr. Pertwee then proceeded to give detailed criticism of the candidates' performances, indicating that some otherwise well-trained speakers had not paid sufficient attention to the definite nature of the poems. In consequence, poem-production was not as satisfactory and individual as it might have been, and, however excellent their previous performances had been under different and more ordinary circumstances, they had shown that they were not yet able to hold a general public audience. Other faults of immaturity and reversions had crept in which, however, with more experience they would be able to eradicate. They should not think that they were completely deserving of this high award simply because they had satisfied their earlier examiners. They must show a sustained advance and sustained and finished artistry.

It would be useful and really most valuable if all potential candidates would attend these Gold Medal Recitals, not only for the preliminary experience gained thereby and the development of their own judgment, with a keener appreciation of what is really required, but for the added advantage of hearing the experienced Examiner's individual remarks, equal to an expensive private consultation with the leading expert concerned with the application of speech-training to the vocal interpretation of poetry, that is, to artistic ends—an absolutely unique combination, with a standard not required by any other body.

The Gold Medal was awarded to Evelyn M. Thornley and Joan Woollcombe.

The Dollar Centre's final meeting of the session took the form of a supper in Castle Campbell Hotel, Dollar.

Mr. William Walker, President of the Club, was in the chair and delighted the audience with an excellent rendering into modern verse of four stanzas of "The Kingis Quair," and also some poems by John Evelyn. Mr. Walker sketched briefly the life of King James I, and the theme of his famous poem, remarking that the club was celebrating the fifth centenary of the poet. The chief guest of the evening, Mr. James Scott, S.S.C., ex-M.P. for Aberdeen and Kincardine, and Private Secretary during his term to the Secretary of State for Scotland, gave a most interesting and arresting address.

At the Hampstead centre, an arranged reading of Shakespeare's *Henry V* has been settled for January 3rd and 17th and on February 7th the business meeting, followed by miscellaneous poems: February 21st, Biblical and Religious poems. The meetings are held at 14 Eldon Road, N.W.3, on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 8 p.m.

IMAGINATION

GRANT us Imagination, Lord,
Lord, grant us this !
Not ease, not honour upon earth,
Not heavenly bliss.

Grant that no gold chrysanthemum
Of pleasure dim
Our vision of the sullen fire
That burnished him.

(Flames that chaotically rock
The stars in space
Strike colours from this garden plot
Of commonplace.)

Grant us the eyes to see the sear
Hell-flickerings
That glowly warm us ; grant that we
May know these things :

The villainy of violence
That wrongs the weak ;
The cowardice of cads that creep
Paunchwise and reek

Poisonously of gas (—yet they
Also are blind :
Lord, grant them sight, that they be moved
And know their kind !)

Help us to penetrate the haze
Of suave pretence
That smothers truth in talk and blurs
Intelligence.

Show us the face of suffering,
The wilt of war,
That we relax not till these things
Shall be no more.

Smash the smooth smugness of our hearts
With thunderbolts !
With lightnings lighten the dark wits
Of us poor dolts !

Possessions, pleasures, pride, respect
Stand not between
Our eyes and the sudden-fading Truth
That we have seen.

Grant us Imagination, Lord ;
Compassion, tears !
Make rebels of us, steeled to fight
These few brief years !

BRIAN PRICE-HEYWOOD.

TO YOUTH

SNATCH at the lilac-scented skirts of Time.
Catch at her wild-rose ankles, clasp her slender knees.
Swiftly she runs along sun-dappled paths
beneath the trees.

No hoary-beard is Time, but loveliness.
Snow does not mark her paths, but young Spring grasses.
Tossing her golden apples carelessly
she passes.

Cry, cry to her that she will pause awhile.
Sigh and importune her that she will stay
and yield her beauty. If she will not listen
what can you say ?

Throw me at least one golden apple, Time.
Oh, we are young, my love and I, let our lips meet
on that enchanted fruit, and laugh and kiss
to find it sweet.

I. M. MILLS.

TO A DOUR LADY

WHY should you wear
This frigid air
Of silent bleak formality?
Your looks express
No happiness,
Nor (if I dare!)
Does holiness
Your presence bless—
Still less,
Attractive cordiality.

Have you so much
Grown out of touch
With life, and love's nobility,
That you must show
Where'er you go
This pose of immobility?

'Tis but futility
And mock humility
To wear a marble mask of petrifaction,
With Summer at her task
Of glorious action,
Creating as she goes
Lily and rose,
Leading a gay procession
Of lovely moments in, for your possession,
And pausing for a while
That you may raise your sombre eyes and smile.

Look, Lady! look about, and you will find
Refreshment and heart's-ease,
Banners of beauty waving in the wind,
And fairy bugles blowing on the breeze. . . .

Lady, your unresponsive looks would sour
The milk of human kindness in an hour!

MARGARET E. STRINGER.

MORE EPIGRAMS by E. Vandermere Fleming

The Muse's Debt to Moses

HOW deep the novel and how deep the stage
Stand in the debt of that old Hebrew sage
Who down from Sinai brought the ten great laws,
Especially that intriguing seventh clause!
What could some authors find to write about
Had Moses rubbed the seventh commandment out?

To Addicts of Some Modern Poetry

In clotted nonsense some contrive to find
Beauty and wisdom and a master-mind;
Unconscious victims of self-flattery
They minister to their own vanity.

Narcissus-like, but o'er a muddy pool,
They murmur: "Truly, I am wonderful!"
What Echo answers them I need not tell;
It could be only their last syllable.

Development

I dreamed a dream; when I awoke from it
This only of my vision could I see:
Jesus, instructed by a Jesuit,
In the true creed of Christianity.

(Acquaintance with several members of the Society of Jesus convinces me that they will be far from offended, as the possession of a saving sense of humour seems to be one of the sundry indispensable qualifications for admission to that great Order.)

Heureka

When Archimedes from his bath sprang out
Crying "Eureka!" there can be no doubt
He did not know that in his breathless state
He had for ever dropped an aspirate.

(In an interesting discussion in a Sunday paper on this question one correspondent suggested, quite wrongly, that, as modern Greek has no aspirates, like Italian and (with very rare exceptions) like French, Archimedes may not really have dropped one. When refuting this suggestion I remarked that many a Cockney would envy this attempt by several nations to "make the world safer for democracy" but that it will be long ere we hear the salutation "'Eil 'Itler.")

THE FALLIBILITY OF CRITICS

THE other day a friend of mine observed that most of the more discussed critics of to-day are not even up to the standard of an average don in the English School at Oxford (and, I presume, Cambridge and other universities). It made me think.

I have found, for instance, that a don, though acquainted with far fewer contemporary poets than many a non-academic critic, can, if I give him a modern poem, make profounder and more useful comments upon it. This, I think, must be due to the wider background; you cannot become an English tutor unless you have read a good deal of your literature—Anglo-Saxon, Middle English, and Modern English down to the last century.[1] And it is very unlikely that you will ever write much good criticism unless you have a fairly sound knowledge of the literature of at least three centuries.

Whether the critic has actually had any connection with academic circles does not, of course, matter: what I am stressing is the importance of a wide background. It may be as wide as that of C. S. Lewis,[2] but such astounding intellectual versatility is extremely rare. The more a critic knows about his own literature, about history, philosophy, even theology, the better. I am not so sure if languages are essential; they are, or should be, useful. That aesthetics is of special importance I hope to show in a later essay. I need hardly say that cold intellect alone is not enough: William Empson's criticism seems to me too limited because over-intellectualized.

T. S. Eliot appears to be recognized as the critic *par example* of our age. And rightly. Scholarly though popular,[3] sane, wise, religious, himself a good poet—he seems to have every qualification.

But critics, being human, are not infallible. Look at Johnson, one of our very greatest. And look at Eliot.

[1] Although the syllabus lays emphasis (in many instances) on quite the wrong authors; and it is notorious that Anglo-Saxon was included just to make the course more difficult.

[2] Author of *The Allegory of Love*, essays in *Essays and Studies*, etc.

[3] In the sense of addressing a large varied audience.

Surely his statement that he finds Shelley " almost unreadable "[1] is an admission that his taste is more limited than it should be. That is disputable (Browning also outgrew Shelley); and I suspect that part of the reason for depreciating Shelley was to make Keats look bigger (this vicious habit of praising one at the expense of another is very widespread to-day). But what about this (from the same book): Goethe " dabbled in both philosophy and poetry and made no great success of either "? Or *The Note on the Verse of John Milton* where he holds that " the auditory imagination leads at least to an occasional levity ":

> " . . . Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can
> And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's Throne,
> To Paquin of Sinaean Kings, and thence
> To Agra and Lahor of great Mogul
> Down to the golden Chersonese. . . ."

and so on " is not serious poetry."[2] Here, I think, it can be shown why Eliot is definitely wrong: the appeal is not purely to the ear; Milton could never have achieved this suggestion of great remoteness with a series of *fictitious*, though equally musical, proper names.

Examples of sheer ignorance are more deplorable. A certain critic of considerable standing, author of a much discussed book on Shelley, was a few years ago lecturing on that poet and throughout pronounced Adonais " Adonis." Some of the audience inferred that he was unable to scan. And when, afterwards, someone pointed out an elementary flaw in his logic (it affected about half of what he had to say), he remarked casually, " Oh ! I had never thought of it like that."

It seems that a good deal of " criticism " is hardly more than humbug—about as farcical as Ezra Pound's scholarship. A common recipe is something like this: Classify as much as possible just for the sake of classification, invent impressive names for the classes (on the analogy of scientific jargon), interlard with quotations (preferably ones referring to chamberpots, slang, sexual organs, drain-pipes, etc.) from

[1] *The Use of Poetry and The Use of Criticism.*

[2] *Essays and Studies*, 1935.

fashionable modernists, back up any theories by quotations from someone you agree with (an unpublished friend will do; but if possible find a professor, and remember to call him famous, important, or such like); and label the whole "a scientific critique."

"Critics," says De Quincey, "are the vicarious readers for the public." I think they should rather be *praegustatores*. No critic can do another man's reading: he can only point to what is good and what is bad, and help men to a better understanding of why it is so. Every reader must, of course, be something of a critic himself: a critic of poets and a critic of critics. He ought, for instance, to be able to say which (if any) of the specimens I append are good criticism and why. And even when reading a good critic he should be able to spot flaws like this: Desmond MacCarthy in an interesting review[1] once stated that *To R.B.* is "one of the best" sonnets ever written by Hopkins, and proceeded to quote it in full. I think it quite probable that many potential readers of Hopkins were thereby deterred from a further exploration of his poetry.

Provided one has a good knowledge of contemporary literature (and that, as many forget, includes American writers), a critical reading of old authors should help one to estimate an author of to-day. It helps Michael Roberts, for example, whom I should call the best of the younger critics.

But in case it should be thought that I am over-rating this necessity for a wide background, "an awareness of the past," I should like to quote the wise words of Eliot:

> "Someone said, 'The dead writers are remote from us because we *know* so much more than they did.' Precisely, and they are that which we know."

Specimens

The following (which I have written) are given as respective examples of false and true criticism. The two genuine ones are intended to have significance in themselves apart from their connection with the main essay.

[1] *Sunday Times*, Feb. 3rd, 1935.

Classical and Romantic

For the last couple of centuries there have, for the critic, been two basic kinds of art, classical and romantic. Every poet had to be classified under one heading or the other; when they tired of fighting about that they decided that Wordsworth, for example, was a romantic who wrote classically, or Housman was romantic in content but classical in form. And what a lot of dust they stirred in their duels over the definitions of the terms!

To some the classical was the diseased condition, to others the romantic. Prodigious researches were undertaken into the causes and symptoms of these very contagious and apparently incurable diseases. But nobody seemed to be very clear about anything, except that every artist suffered from both diseases, the symptoms of which appeared to be very much alike.

But away from all this hubbub Sperber, a Swedish philologist, was working out his brilliant theory that sexuality is the main source from which speech generally was developed. Now here, I believe, lies the secret of the whole matter: male is classical, female romantic, and good art is the offspring—simple but profound. A poem, then, is physiological. And just as scientists have shown that there are many stages between a complete male and a complete female, so in art we have the corresponding gradations. That classical and romantic are no more than sexual concepta is also proved from the fact that the hair and its disturbances are known to be associated with the sexual system (Swinburne's flowing locks and all that).

Realism

According to the O.E.D., realism is "close resemblance to what is real . . . in reference to art and literature, often with the implication that the details are of an unpleasant or sordid character." So the realist is the writer who selects the unpleasant and the sordid; and to him these only are real: "Evil, be thou my good." No, not quite: the concept of good must not be allowed to intrude, even in this disguise.

Now, the widespread opinion that artists should be realists (or else surrealists) can be shown to be wrong-minded. You must not leave anything out, they say. You cannot, even James Joyce cannot, put *everything* in; but what you select must represent only the elements of reality; beauty, the pleasant, the good, and such cannot be included because they are unreal. "Because they are unreal"—here is the flaw. We have, in other words, allowed ourselves to be bullied by a philosophy that is despicable, an outlook that is mean. "I swear," says Whitman, and Whitman for all his limitations knew (intuitively) a thing or two:

> "I swear the earth shall surely be complete to him or her who shall be complete,
> The earth remains jagged and broken only to him or her who remains jagged and broken."

The sort of realism we need is one that makes us more aware of the good and the beautiful; that will never be given us by those, "the jagged and broken," for whom evil and ugliness are the only realities.

Surrealism

A good case could be made out for leaving surrealism to die out on its own; but I think that, before avoiding it as a debased form of art, we should understand why it is a debased form of art: more properly, not art at all.

To the surrealist, poetry and psychic automatism are synonymous. Turn on the tap of the subconscious and the resultant "perpetual flow of irrational thought" is poetry! It all looks suspiciously easy. And so it is. Almost anyone can produce a surrealist object. To make quite sure, I myself have tried. Present the object over the name of a well-known surrealist, and any devotee will be taken in. Several of my acquaintances have (for a joke) done so with their own productions at parties, and always successfully.

One of the most noticeable things about surrealism is its deliberateness. It fails because it is too conscious, not because it is not conscious enough.

Who indeed are the surrealists? As Henry Treece points

out in the Winter Number of *Seven*, the name has wrongly been applied to certain writers, such as Dylan Thomas, whose elaborate technique should alone have exempted them from such libel. Even if we confine the name to those who are professedly surrealists, we should remember that men are not always what they say they are.

" A perpetual flow of irrational thought," may be very useful to the psycho-analyst, but it is no more poetry than a discharge of pus is sculpture. If indeed it is " perpetual," then surrealism proves itself extra-artistic under the law that a work of art is a unity, self-complete, the whole modified by its components, the components by the whole.

To the student of aesthetics or semantics all this should be fairly clear. P. Leon's *Art and the Unconscious*[1] is a paper that should be useful in this connection (although the word " surrealist " is not even mentioned). He shows that " when the artist organizes some mnemic residuum he and we become clearly conscious of it." Which means that even the division into lines is a conscious act ; and that a writer approaches poetry in proportion as he moves away from would-be surrealism.

I cannot do better than quote a passage from Professor Collingwood's profoundly important book *The Principles of Art* (1938) :

" Consciousness can never attend to more than a part of the total sensuous-emotional field ; but either it may recognize this as belonging to itself, or it may refuse so to recognize it. In the latter case, certain feelings are not ignored, they are disowned ; the conscious self disclaims responsibility for them, and thus tries to escape being dominated by them without the trouble of dominating them. This is the ' corrupt consciousness,'[2] which is the source of what pschologists call repression. Its imaginations share in the corruption ; they are ' fantasies,' sentimentalized or bowdlerized pictures of experience, Spinoza's ' inadequate ideas of affections ' ; and the mind that takes refuge in them from the facts of experience delivers itself into the power of the feelings it has refused to face."

In the past parody has served a useful purpose as a correc-

[1] *Modern Tendencies in Philosophy*. Aristotelian Society supp. Vol. XIII. He incidentally reveals the hollowness, the irrelevance, of Freudian art criticism.

[2] For a fuller understanding of what Professor Collingwood means by this the reader is referred to the whole of Book II.

tive for mannerisms and extremism of various kinds. But who can parody the meaningless, or who can make fun of a clown? I doubt if a nearer approach can be made to a parody on surrealism than the following, with its mixture of sense and nonsense :

TOUCH AND GHOST

Self-abhorrent soundprongs, magnetizing improbable Golcondas,
Wench for the twitching minutes an introversible deathpod.
And this obsequious dungfrenzy, lunging in falsetto
Till oleander'd dottrels squirt applause,
Flays name-tags tame nags sexspokes and slithering
Mock-commentaries like an outraged propeller
Wolfing long-tailed broadbean-greenbrown fieldmice.

Rough-stuff chestphones bludgeoning the humdrum knickknacks
Flick back quick quacks' gewgaw'd brickbats,
And among them the farinaceous thimbletaps inextricably doddering
Swaddle the Twelve Commissioners of the Horn-rimm'd Hatetrack.
" Why O Why ? " is the bargeman's cry, sharing the blaring of the Golden Plaice,
But the dowser turns to the pile-haired urns and sees in the teats of the whinnying ferns
The pusponds wriggle through a shop-soiled smile.

TERENCE HEYWOOD.

THE VOLUNTEER

HE spurns the politicians' pinchbeck stage,
Where puppets strutting mouth uncouth conceits
To profit knaves and which the fool repeats
In ignorance or craven vassalage :
He quits the land whose government denies
So much as livelihood from honest toil,
To fight for liberty on spanish soil. . . .
His column is mass-murdered from the skies.

In attitudes grotesque and unrefined,
Their faces stamped with death's perpetual stare,
He and his stricken comrades sleep : the price
Of steadfastness and singleness of mind
Is paid. . . . But, though the flesh lies rotting there,
The world is richer for his sacrifice.

E. CURT PETERS.

A YEAR AND A DAY

THERE was no dawn, no sunrise
Only mist
Too heavy for the Morning to keep tryst
With wakened skies.
Even at noon the languid river lies
Invisible, through veils of amethyst,
Yet, moving, sighs,
And sighing, finds release from charm and spell;
Sun rays dispel
Lingering clouds; dark waters turn to blue;
Grass blades with dew
Are gemmed in star-points of prismatic hue.

Now Afternoon
Glows like a steady flame. A crescent moon
Rests high above the sunset, and the hill.
Still waiting—listening still,
The enchanted Earth, soft yielded to the thrill
Of vireo's tune,
(Like some far echo of forgotten rune,
Working its will
Of magic—mournful for the rose, so soon
To perish—chiming low, in mystic croon
To Summer,) rests, likewise; content, until
Her beauty shall decay, her tardy fruitage winter-kill.

Thus, then, my Year—my Day,
Is ended. Harvest time fares fast away,
Not to return.
Briefly the red autumnal fires shall burn
To ashen gray;
Withered the leafage; brown and dry the fern;
White-faced, another Moon shall stare, and yearn
Over the fields for fallen blooms of May—
For hot, victorious August's crown of bay,
For ripening frosts, that bade October stay,
Grieving that Time, whose toil we may not spurn,
Like corn in Indian quern,
Grindeth to dust each garnered Yesterday!

ELISE FELLOWS WHITE.

Maine, U.S.A.

TENNYSON AND VICTOR HUGO

Two Poets, Two Nations, One Epoch

TENNYSON and Victor Hugo. A comparison between the two greatest poets of the nineteenth century might well seem to be at first sight a preposterous idea. Were there ever two men, two writers so unlike one to another as these were? However, in studying them together for the first time and from a new angle, and looking closely at their works and the period during which they both lived, we shall find that Tennyson and Victor Hugo have much more in common than is generally supposed or known. On the other hand, the centenary of the Victorian era as well as the closer bonds of understanding between Great-Britain and France that culminated in Their Majesties' visit to Paris last summer, not to speak of more recent events, all this adds a topical interest to the present study.

To begin with, let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that poetry has no place or practical value in modern life. On the contrary, we should look up to it to try and remove the confusion and the gloom prevailing everywhere in our time. Many a lone man or woman knows that, who passing through such periods of stress instinctively seeks for the most comforting and the most cherished of the Muses. Let us not therefore put an onus upon poetry to-day, remembering that poetry is much more than the stuff our dreams are made of; it *is* or should be life itself, a vital expression of living man as it surges forth ever new, ever convincing, from the poet's lips, the essential song of his heart, the enduring voice of mankind.

The true poet—of course, we are concerned only with him and not with the hard-tasked rhymester—the true poet in all ages is almost always something of a hero. Notwithstanding the primeval passions and appetites let loose upon a blind or brutal world, does he not keep the real spiritual values alive? Does he not with valiant heart and clear judgment express and defend them? From this point of view, the poet is truly a sage, sometimes even he may be a seer. Tennyson and Victor Hugo were such men and such poets. During their lifetime and ever since, it may be said that their voices as well as their examples have been a

constant inspiration to their own peoples and countries. They both bequeathed to us a treasure-house of images, of sensations and ideas that have swelled mankind's inheritance, and into which we can all share freely and inexhaustibly enjoy. . . .

Of the poet and the poet's function, Tennyson said :

> The poet in a golden clime was born,
> With golden stars above,
> Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
> The love of love.

Now let us turn to Victor Hugo :

> Beni soit qui me haît et béni soit qui m'aime.
> A l'amour, à l'esprit donnons tous nos instants.
> Fou qui poursuis la gloire ou qui creuse un problème !
> Moi, je ne veux qu'aimer, car j'ai si peu de temps.

The quotations show that Tennyson and Victor Hugo were at one on the poet's mission and on the whole their message was the same : to love all human kind. We shall soon see that they are indeed much akin to one another through their congenial gifts, their personality and their work no less than with the discrepancy of their individual growth. They may be likened to two giant and beautiful trees that have soared up towards the skies thanks to the same inner impulsion, but owing to differences in the earth and the climate have flowered differently. The same vigorous sap runs through the stock and the branches ; their topmost shoots are bathed in the same glorious sunlight and likewise feel nature's caresses. . . .

Let us now observe many strange coincidences :

The two poets were born seven years one after the other: Victor Hugo in 1802, Tennyson in 1809 ; anyhow they both lived at the same time. They both made themselves known to the literary world at the same age, when they were 17 years old. They devoted themselves at once to a poetical career and thanks to favourable circumstances they were able to follow their imperious calling. In the same year 1826, were published Tennyson's first verses, " *Poems by two Brothers*," which he brought out anonymously with his

brother Charles, and Hugo's "*Odes et Ballades*." Let us note that Tennyson and Victor Hugo both had two elder brothers, and more interesting still, while they were yet young, they had the luck to use freely a well-stocked home library and thus they could give free play to their imaginations as well as widen their general knowledge and form their judgments; we may safely assume, however, that the library in the Rue des Feuillantines of which the young Victor availed himself without restraint was far from having the same high standard and eclectic range as the Rev. G. C. Tennyson's library; that might answer one or two queries on the poets' evolution, but we will leave the matter at that. In 1826, Hugo was 24 years old. In 1832, when he was 23 years old, Tennyson published this time under his own name his first book of verse, *Poems, chiefly lyrical* that attracted much general attention, and he followed it the next year, in 1833, at 24 years, with a second volume. *Poems*, that definitely made him rank as a leading poet of his time. Tennyson and Victor Hugo attained to popularity and later on to fame at about the same age: Hugo became one of the forty "Immortals" of the Académie Française when he was 39 years old; Tennyson was appointed Poet-Laureate when he was 41 years old; Hugo was made a French Peer by Louis-Phillipe at 43; under the Third Republic he was elected a senator at 74; Tennyson was made a Peeer of the Realm when he too was 74. Their genius found its greatest accents when they both were struck by a most grievous sorrow: Tennyson lost in an accident his most cherished friend, Arthur Hallam; Victor Hugo lost in an accident his most cherished daughter, Leopoldine. Their intellectual evolution, from the philosophic anxiety of the early poems to the final affirmation of a similar faith in human nature and in human progress; their spiritual evolution from the first metaphysical meditations to the same final belief in the Christian or theistic faith, also have many common points. Whether in their life or their work, they both were highly and truly representative of their own kin and country, with their characteristics and particular tendencies. Neither the one nor the

other ever stopped working—in the best sense of the word —they never ceased to write poetry till their very last days. They died both at the very same age (the age when that other Olympian poet, Goethe, died too), exactly at 83 years old. Tennyson lies buried in the company of kings and other great Englishmen in Westminster Abbey; Victor Hugo was given a tomb with France's greatest sons, in the Panthéon.

In this epitome of two great lives, do we not see already a most astonishing and an almost sublime concordance of events? And is it not strange that on either side of the Channel, at the same time, a poetical genius appeared: "echo sonore," "lyre vibrante," and thus immortalized a nation's wistful or passionate dream? Tennyson and Victor Hugo, who both remained in the true tradition of their respective countries, resemble one another thereby. Moreover, when literary history might well have fallen back to some dull and banal classical style, the one gave a new vitality to the English Romantic school by shaping it according to his own mastery and personal vision, while the other no less masterfully proclaimed the advent and the much needed reaction of the new Romantic school in France. There are some who, looking upon Tennyson's simple, lofty and (even before he became a Peer in his own right) aristocratic life, would fain smile at Hugo's famous crimson waistcoat and his thunderous voice; but it cannot be gainsaid that both waistcoat and thunder came to rallying the high-spirited and worthy youth of France.

In his poem "*Ulysses*" Tennyson wrote:

> Death closes all; but something ere the end,
> Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
> Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods. . .
> . . . . Come, my friends, come,
> 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
> We are not now that strength which in old days
> Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are,
> One equal temper of heroic hearts,
> Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Let us turn to Victor Hugo's verse:

Ceux qui vivent, ce sont ceux qui luttent, ce sont
ceux dont un dessein ferme emplit l'âme et le front,
ceux qui d'un haut destin gravissent l'âpre cîme,
ceux qui marchent pensifs, épris d'un but sublime,
ayant devant les yeux sans cesse, nuit et jour,
ou quelque saint labeur, ou quelque grand amour.

One could quote very many similar ideas and similar verse in the two poets' works. That is due to the fact that Tennyson and Victor Hugo, inasmuch as they were true poets, and great poets at that, both had the same acute awareness of the outside world surrounding them, of the problems that were confronting them whether in England or in France during the nineteenth century, of the currents and counter-currents that ceaselessly, all through their life, exerted their influence upon the British and French people alike even to their lowest strata. Because their sensitiveness was ever so well attuned to everything that was going on around them, because theirs was a congenial need ever to understand things and people, because they were both ever ready to vouchsafe their all-embracing kindness, because also they felt to the core that in the writing of poetry they were discharging a sacred duty towards their own selves and towards their fellowmen, Tennyson and Victor Hugo never really doubted of their self-appointed mission. Bearing well in mind the divergency of races, of environment as well as of education, this mission consisted for them in meditating upon the past, in interpreting the present, in preparing for the future.

Now let us try and briefly sketch the situation in both countries during the poets' lifetime :

In England, the rapid and extraordinary development of industry and the many abuses to which it gave rise, the new "Liberal" movement for reform and justice for all, the scientific discoveries and attendant stress and doubt that was cast upon the religious mind, this and probably many other things contributed to create a condition of intellectual and moral instability that permeated through the apparent solidity of Victorian society. Under the wise rule and guidance of Queen Victoria, the English people resolutely

sought and were able to find their social and national equilibrium. The century and the reign no doubt were in every respect glorious, but not without anguish for those who keenly perceived the momentous changes and the turmoil of these decisive years. Tennyson was one of them. But notwithstanding the doubt and the ordeal, thanks to his lofty ideals and to the faith cast down deep into his soul and heart, he was saved from a complete disenchantment. And his poetry bears witness to the trust he put in a better and happier world.

In his poem *Love thou thy land* Tennyson wrote :

> But pamper not a hasty time
> Nor feed with crude imaginings
> The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings
> That every sophister can lime.
>
> Make knowledge circle with the winds,
> But let her herald, Reverence, fly
> Before her to whatever sky
> Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Believing in human progress, but insisting as he did upon the necessity and value of ' Reverence ' (or, in other words, thoughtful prudence) to ensure that such progress as man can hope for matures in the long run, Tennyson was true to English type. His French counterpart, Victor Hugo, in his own way was no less true to the French national character. Let us say that he was rather more . . . ardent and much more verbose too. In a nutshell, he wanted Progress (with a capital P) right on the spot at once, and Justice and Fraternity and what not ! Who dare blame him for that ? He too lived at a time fraught with confusion in France. Political events from Napoleon's downfall to the proclamation of the Third Republic, not forgetting the Restoration and the Second Empire, always were a new incentive for him to write and to do. Whether as a poet or as a novelist, as a playwright or as a polemist, all through his long and strenuous life no less fertile in incidents than the very history of France at the time, Victor Hugo could reflect as a " crystal " (to use his own vivid image) the play of light and shadow that reveals human destiny ; he saw

and showed the grotesqueness and the tragedy of it all ; he interpreted it as best he could. Thus he was led to conceive and express himself as (was he not a Frenchman, and therefore unavoidably over-talkative and sometimes overflowing ?) the wistful Olympio of *Les voix intérieures*, the fierce Titan of exile days, the Seer of *Les Contemplations*. Not unlike Tennyson, doubt and melancholy often darkened his thoughts and almost always he eloquently put them into word-pictures :

> Que faire et que penser ? Nier, douter ou croire ?
> Carrefour ténébreux, triple route ; nuit noire ;
> Le plus sage s'assied sous l'arbre du chemin,
> disant tout bas : j'irai, Seigneur, où tu m'envoies.
> Il espère et, de loin, dans les trois sombres voies,
> il écoute, pensif, marcher le genre humain.

He, however, like Tennyson, was able to emerge a victor from the age-long fight against the hydra of negation and despair. He, too, could and did touch, like Tennyson, upon all the strings of the lyre and with an equal mastery upon them all. Like Tennyson, he wrote poems that are portrait-paintings, while others are songs, elegies, odes, epics, not forgetting those that are confessions wrung out from a torn heart and soul ; and yet never did he lose his wonderful command of his instrument. The versatility of the poets is really marvellous as is the inexhaustible richness of their music and song. Like Tennyson, Victor Hugo was at once a painter, a poet as well as a musician in words, a verbal magician as it were who time and again accomplished miracles. He has conjured up for our everlasting delight the awe-inspiring *Djinns* and the antique freshness of *Booz endormi*, the melodious and sad *Tristesse d'Olympio* and the majestuous *Soleils couchants*, *Jeanne au pain sec* so whimsical and dear to every parent's heart ; *Aymerillot* so forceful, *L'expiation* (the Moscow retreat) so dramatic and awful (one could easily quote another hundred no less famous titles) with the same felicitous treatment both in the form and the expression. Who is likely to forget the best poems in *La Légende des Siècles*, this epic fresco of humanity's forward march ? Can it be that the same man wrote such a delightful little song as this :

Viens—une flûte invisible
soupire dans les vergers.
La chanson la plus paisible.
est la chanson des bergers.

Le vent ride, sous l'yeuse,
le sombre miroir des eaux.
La chanson la plus joyeuse
est la chanson des oiseaux.

Que nul soin ne te tourmente.
Aimons-nous, aimons-nous toujours!
La chanson la plus charmante
est la chanson des amours.

Is that not as enchanting as let us say *Come into the Garden, Maud?*

Of course, in Hugo's copious work (it comprises some twenty volumes of verse alone) everything is not of the same high quality. Several eminent critics made similar reserves in their appreciation of Tennyson's less abundant poetical work. Even the greatest genius cannot always soar but must tread on firm ground at times; when he does so, not unlike the albatross of which Baudelaire wrote, he is liable to expose himself to mockery. That is what happened to Victor Hugo unfortunately, because unlike Tennyson he was endowed with a vanity that sometimes amounted to bumptiousness and matched his genius. Since he was utterly convinced about his function as a "torch-bearer" or as a "prophet"—we could hardly complain remembering so many beautiful pages that sprang from this very conviction—it so happened that he went astray sometimes and wrote redundant, absurd and gibberish verse. Even that does not belittle him in the least. Great poet as he is, he needs not be a great thinker (to quote Emile Faguet) nor even a great man, if it so pleases whoever does not like him. It is said that some years ago a journalist interviewing André Gide asked him whom he considered to be the greatest French poet ever; to which Gide answered "*Victor Hugo, malheureusement.*" ("Victor Hugo, unfortunately.") The point was not lacking in wit, but we must take it with "our tongue in our cheek." The shade of Victor

Hugo must have been mightily pleased anyway, and whether with or without reserve, André Gide's lapidary appreciation did not upset, so far as I believe, it should rather have satisfied Hugo's numerous admirers, including the present writer.

Space is limited in an article, and it is impossible therefore to write at great length on all the other points that come to mind in such a comparative study of Tennyson and Victor Hugo. The best we can do is to try and briefly review the other chief points they have in common,—all the curious analogies that are to be found in their lives and works, according to which they will appear to us like two kinsmen, nay, like two brothers as dear one as the other to our heart, both radiating the same light.

Tennyson and Victor Hugo were both of a very fine outward appearance; they struck their contemporaries, the greatest even among them, with the same admiration and awesome wonder. They were both of a high stature and of the same strong build, with a noble demeanour and striking features. Genius and fire shone on their faces; they both breathed of the highest spiritual life and the same inward harmony.

We possess Carlyle's testimony on Tennyson: "one of the finest looking men in the world," and in a later passage he refers to Tennyson's "air of sombre majesty."

Theophile Gautier wrote of Victor Hugo: "Victor Hugo est vraiment d'une beauté et d'une ampleur surhumaines" and he further spoke of "l'air de grandeur pensive et de noblesse grave qui était l'essence même de sa physionomie. Jamais la poésie ne s'exprima d'une façon plus définitive et plus souveraine sur un visage d'homme." When it comes to beauty, Theophile Gautier truly was a connoisseur.

Tennyson and Victor Hugo both loved deeply their homes, their families, their countries and mankind. Not even Hugo's famous *liaison* with Mlle. Juliette Drouet, that later on found its full justification, ever marred the poet's veneration for his dear wife, for his children and grandchildren, and to the end he carried with him the same love

for all living creatures, were they the humblest and most despised ones. When we think of Hugo's love for his children, we conjure up at once some touching and fine poems and songs that he wrote for them or about them. Let us congratulate ourselves on the fact that he was born in France; should he have been a British citizen, what with the English restraint and sense of decorum, these poems so tender, so moving, would have been lost to us.

Tennyson and Victor Hugo were both conscientious and untiring workers. Not only they never stopped writing and through their infinite ability to take pains were able to obtain a deeper mastery of their art, but they also ceaselessly—as the consecutive and minute revisions of their MSS. bear witness—were seekers of the same wrought-out perfection. When they reached it and often the sublime, they owed their success to the intensity of their passionate quest no less than to their marvellous qualities as craftsmen.

Tennyson and Victor Hugo were both gifted with a powerful imagination and a wonderful sense of melody. They had also the same intense vision of the outside world and the faculty to link a clear-cut and effective word-picture to their vision. Moreover, theirs was a highly sensitive internal ear that could perceive and appreciate the most subtle and most delicate play of verbal music. Thus it comes that their poetry, endowed with such fine gifts of the highest order, making the fullest and cleverest use of all the resources of rhythm and often rhyme, ever renewed with a constant flow of new and original metaphors and symbols, gives to the reader the enchantment of a beauty that is clearer with Hugo, more fluid-like with Tennyson, but always matchless. It can also be said that both Tennyson and Victor Hugo, lyrical poets *par excellence*, excelled especially in lyrical descriptions. They also felt deeply and could successfully evoke the rugged simplicity and fierceness of epic times and epic sentiments; in some of their work, they have given a new life to old-age fables and legends, such as depict the medieval times and the tales

of knighthood. For instance, one could compare the *Idylls of the King* and several poems in *La Légende des Siècles*.

Tennyson and Victor Hugo sympathized both with the poor and humble folk to whom they devoted a more or less important place in their works. For instance, one could compare *Enoch Arden* and *Les pauvres gens*.

Tennyson and Victor Hugo both loved the sea and they magnificently sung her praise. It so happened that they both lived in an island at the same time and a number of years : Tennyson in the Isle of Wight from 1853 till his death, Victor Hugo at Jersey and afterwards at Guernsey from 1852 to 1870. But whereas Tennyson generally describes the sea in her various moods with a view to give local colour to a poem or merely to vent some reminiscences, in Hugo's work the sea plays a chief part and often is the chief actor in the drama. To wit : *Oceano Nox*, etc.

Tennyson and Victor Hugo were both practical idealists ; in their poetry they were able to blend and harmonize their strong individual romantic bent with an objective outlook upon the people, the nature and the times as they affected them. They both have become great " classics ".

Tennyson and Victor Hugo can be quoted as two remarkable exceptions to the age-long rule that recognized poets only in so far as they were poor and wretched human-beings. Notwithstanding their rather modest and sometimes difficult beginnings, they both managed to do very well for themselves and they died fairly rich, particularly so Victor Hugo, who with a shrewd financial judgment throughout his lifetime made profitable investments and left a considerable fortune to his heirs, including several finely appointed houses. All of which should encourage poets or would-be poets and goes to show that poetry may not be such a bad career after all.

At ten years distance, death dealt a very cruel blow to the two poets, and it inspired some of their most beautiful poetry. Tennyson published *In Memoriam* in 1850 ; Victor Hugo published in 1856 his work *Les Contemplations*, which contains under the title " Pauca Maea " a series of seventeen poems devoted to the memory of his daughter,

Leopoldine. In these poems, Tennyson and Victor Hugo as men and as artists both followed the same calvary and they related it step by step, from the first explosion of despair to the evocation of cherished, heart-breaking memories, until they both reached up to the same religious resignation and expressed the same faith in Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Goodness and the immortality of the soul.

Tennyson and Victor Hugo both had at one time or another their fits of nationalist or chauvinistic exaltation ; it inspired some moving and very fine pieces of poetry, such as *The Charge of the Light Brigade* and Hugo's famous *Hymn to the Dead of France* that now ranks as a national song. Stranger still, Tennyson and Victor Hugo had both the same visionary and mystic faculty, as the following example will clearly demonstrate : In *Locksley Hall*, did not Tennyson give to mankind everywhere the same message of a brotherly and international co-operation ? Did he not predict the marvels, if not the horrors, of modern aviation ? Victor Hugo, in his latest poems, *Leviathan*, *Plein ciel*, prophesied also the new aircraft (some fifty years before it became a reality) and he too announced the Federation of the United States of Europe and of the world.

The following verse is taken from Hugo's poem *Plein ciel*, in which the poet speaks of the new " winged aircraft " :

. . . Il fait germer la vie humaine dans ces champs
où Dieu n'avait encor semé que des couchants
et moissonné que des aurores.
Il entend, sous son vol qui fend les airs sereins
croître et frémir partout les peuples souverains,
ces immenses épis sonores.

Nef magique et suprême. Elle a, rien qu'en marchant,
changé le cri terrestre en pur et joyeux chant,
rajeuni les races flétries,
établi l'ordre vrai, montré le chemin sûr,
Dieu juste ! et fait entrer dans l'homme tant d'azur,
qu'elle a supprimé les patries.

Elle a cette divine et sainte fonction
de composer là-haut l'unique nation,
à la fois première et dernière ;
de promener l'essor dans le rayonnement,
et de faire planer, ivre de firmament,
la liberté dans la lumière.

Is it not true then to say that Tennyson and Victor Hugo resemble one another in so many ways? Whether we are French or English people, through a better knowledge of their works, we will certainly come to know one another better, and that is most necessary and much hoped-for to-day when our everyday life in its individual, social and national aspects more than ever before is dependent upon a close and durable understanding between our two countries.

To conclude, Tennyson and Victor Hugo, equally great men and artists, spiritual and glorious sons of their countries and their century, belong indeed to the same lineage of great poets, of the golden-voice bards who, through the ages since civilization dawned upon our world, recount and make History. Their anguish and their meditation extended to and identified with the broader human experience, they were both intent upon the advancement of Truth, of Beauty, of Kindness. In the end, thereby, they are alike to us in their pity and in their love, and their songs will remain mankind's everlasting joy.

FELIX ROSE.

M. Felix Rose est le compilateur et traducteur en langue poétique française de "Les Grands Lyriques Anglais," la première anthologie *bilingue* de la poésie lyrique de langue anglaise depuis Shakespeare jusqu'à John Masefield, avec un avant-propos de M. le Professeur Gustave Rudler, Professeur de littérature française à l'Université d'Oxford, Un superbe volume de 416 pages in-12 sur beau papier, (comprenant 150 poèmes originaux et 150 traductions poétiques avec une notice bibliographique et critique sur chaque auteur cité), en souscription à la Librairie Henri Didier, Éditeurs, Paris, 35 francs. Il n'est malheureusement accordé, en raison de l'abondance des sujets, qu'une place restreinte à l'étude des littératures étrangères dans les programmes de l'enseignement en France. Et, dans cette étude, la poésie est réduite à presque rien. Les revues littéraires et les journaux ne publient jamais, ou si rarement, des traductions des poètes étrangers. En conséquence, le public français en général, les étudiants et les nombreux amis des Belles-Lettres en particulier, restent dans l'ignorance des grands courants poétiques, des œuvres poétiques maîtresses qui font la gloire des pays voisins et amis. L'auteur-traducteur, M. Félix Rose, homme-de-lettres et conférencier français, luimême poète, est fixé en Angleterre depuis plus de dix années; il a pu se familiariser avec toutes les nuances, avec toutes les beautés d'une langue aux résonnances particulières.

NIGHT PIECE: LUNIGIANA

THE night is still, no moon has risen yet,
only forerunning, rays, luminous, pale,
fill the dark sky.
Nothing has substance now,
grey veils divide the earth and air;
the mountain tops have merged snow cloud and snow,
and all their silver crowns grow blurred and dim.

Nothing has colour now,
blanched as a bone the long white road
runs between cypress trees.
Only a light in a hovel
high up on the mountain side
burns golden and warm.

No cart comes down the white road;
no one moves in the shade
of the spade-pointed crypress trees.
Only above the young corn,
and between the straight, silvery stems of the corn
and the tangled leaves
of weed and wild flower,
the fireflies dance unwearying
their dance of Life and Death.
Birth and Begetting,
Dissolution—Death.
Dance between moonrise and set
the brief, inevitable sarabande
of all created things.

Behind their spangled posturings,
dark on the plain,
lies Luni, city of the moon.
Her lamps are buried deep beneath the dust,
shard upon broken shard,
the curved Etruscan lamps like water flowers.
No man knows now the tongue her lovers spoke,
no man brings offerings to her forgotten Gods.
Maybe the waves remember, or the wind
that prays between the pines,

and whispers through the young green corn
deep-rooted down amid her mouldered kings.

I look up to the light on the hillside,
and I think of old women
winding grey yarn ;
of fire gleam on cups and white platters ;
of cradles rocking, and the smell
of new baked bread.
I think of men coming home weary,
and lovers who kiss by the door.

The fireflies dance between the leaves.
They make patterns above the young corn.
I think of movement, of wings,
of strong fins in the sea ;
of the hooves of the herd on the grassland,
and the bee coming home to her hive.
I consider the seedtime and harvest,
and the beasts that increase on the earth.

I turn to the darkness of Luni,
and I think of decay :
of dynasties fallen, and kings long dead ;
of the rot and the worm,
and the rust on the sword.
I think of beauty soon tarnished,
and age growing strengthless and dull,
and I know
all must grow old and unlovely,
and nothing endures.

So I stand and look up to the mountains,
to the lights, and the houses of men ;
to life moving between the young corn,
moving and mating,
pursuer—pursued ;
and Luni lying beneath the dark sod,
rotten, and old.

Then I turn from the earth growing weary
of all I have seen.
I loosen my garments and let them slip down.
Warm with the warmth of my flesh
they lie heaped on the sand.
Like the sheath of the bud,
like the skin of the snake,
useless, discarded.
Then I turn to the sea,
the dark, unfathomable sea,
and I lift up my arms,
I feel the wet wind on my skin.
There is no line dividing the dark,
There is no end to the waters before me.
I run down to the waves,
naked and free.

The earth is behind me,
the earth with its lights and its warmth,
beauty and movement,—decay,
and my clothes that lie limp on the shore,
empty, forgotten.

The water is cold, like a hand
it encircles my feet, and its clasp
fills me with fear.
But soon its touch becomes a caress,
gentle and cool,
and I give myself into its keeping.
I am one with the sea,
with the cool oblivion of waters
that closes above me.
And I know that some day
Death will come to me thus in the darkness,
and I am not afraid.

BARBARA BINGLEY

THE OPEN HAND

SEE, dear! My hand is open! You are free.
I would not hold you by a single thread.
All love I give—with perfect liberty—
For love held by restraint is cold and dead.
Upon my palm—a bird comes—wings alight—
Love bids me clasp it closely to my breast.
But as it poises—for its instant flight—
My steady hand—a haven makes of rest.
So bird and man are mine—I leave them free.
They fly into the world but with a smile
I say, "God speed"—for surely back to me
Will come, my man, my bird to rest awhile.
So love, I give you perfect liberty!
See, dear, my hand is open—you are free!

BEATRICE MANSFIELD
(MRS. RICHARD MANSFELD).

DEAD HAND

THE windows closed, the curtains drawn—
Is this his room who loved the dawn?
The bedclothes smooth from head to feet—
Is this his bed who ne'er was neat?
I take his hand, so dim and cold,
It knows me not, I loose my hold,
And lay it stiffly on his breast,
And marvel there to see it rest.

This is his hand. I tell each deed
This hand has done, and try to lead
My heart to feel this hand is his,
As my stern mind has said it is.
Things are that ghosts come as I stare
And take their turn in holding there
The white hand that I ceased to hold;
In turn they fade: they find it cold.

A cricket ball: its ghostly form
Rolls on; the hand it knew was warm.
A pack of cards: they fall away;
The hand they knew knew how to play.

A book : its useless pages go ;
Helpless the hand it used to know.
A banjo string shrinks to the ground :
The hand it knew could make it sound.

A letter I once wrote. It flies
Unloved ; the hand uncaring lies.
A phantom ring. . . . Can hand forswear
Vows made with other hand to wear
Till death. . . . My love ! hear, understand,
Come back, my love . . . see, take my hand,
My love, come back . . . I'll hold you till
You answer. . . . Though you lie so still.

RHODA E. CUTBUSH.

SEPTEMBER MORNING

HOW still they are, the mornings of September,
In all the shining grass there is no breath,
Only the hearts of men are dark with tempest,
And in their hands is death.

If men once more love mercy and forgiveness,
Joy will return and happy laughter ring ;
As sweetly as a bird in Autumn singing
The hearts of men will sing.

When will the world forsake its worthless idols
And that unquiet heart where tempest seethes
Be shadowless and calm as a still meadow,
As grass where no wind breathes.

PAULINE HUTHWAITE.

NOVEMBER SUNSET

THE flowerless garden, grey and olive-green,
Shows leaves, no colour, on dank, ragged grass ;
A tangle of brown stems ; metallic sheen
Of laurels, dulled by fog. . . . I saw him pass,
That one bird singing, black, cutting the mist,
His flight a definite stroke from tree to tree.

Frost makes the song keen : old leaves curl and twist,
But the young aspen gains deep clarity.

Beyond the dark precision of the beech,
Etched on flat sky ; beyond the wilder shapes
Of trees untended, desolate, far away ;
Beyond the farthest woodland's farthest reach
The living brightness of the world escapes,
Unhurried, clear, to colour a new day.

E. M. WALKER.

WHEN I AM GONE . . .

WHEN I am gone say not " He's dead,"
Weep not for youth so early fled
From Life ere Life could crown his head.

For what could all Life's laurels mean
To one who yet had never seen
In Life but one unendless spleen ?

Life is a nightmare without sleep ;
You try to fly, you try to leap,
You want to scream, you want to weep,

You find no wings, your limbs are numb,
You have no voice, your soul is dumb,
You are crushed beneath some unknown thumb.

So Death shall mean Delivery :
From chains of limitation free
I'll live, not write, my poetry.

My Thought, no more encaged in rhyme,
Shall Be, not tease, the Thing sublime,
And leap beyond the bourns of Time.

So do not say " He's dead " and weep,
But rather that Life could not keep
The Mind too swift, the Soul too deep.

E. DA ROCHA MIRANDA.

Milane, 1938.

SLEEP

FRAIL with exhaustion of the newly born,
The flower produced, the infant freshly torn,
Royally your head on silken cushion lies,
Velvet the lashes on your closing eyes,
I have seen springtime, snowdrop's austere birth,
The first faint infants on the New Year's earth
Sweetly surviving sword thrusts through the snow,
Braving the blizzard, lamps of palest glow,
So now your profile, pallid in the night
Of passion's aftermath is tender with the light
Of steady sleep and rests in birth's relief
Void of all hardness, curving as a leaf
What Victory folds its pinions in your joy?
What triumph sleeps within this lovely boy?

M. E. MITCHELL.

TIME AND THE DREAM

I AM obsessed with Time, and why not so,
When in this bosom rings the chime of years?
Within a frail and darkened chamber flow
Those rythmic tides that are as salt as tears.
Each beating pulse contrives with silent voice
To warn me of its evanescent gifts,
Inexorable arbiter of choice
No hope may vanquish. As each tempo shifts
I would have done with counting, and yet I
Must dream the dream indifferent to the beat
Of tyrant Time, ignore, while I deny
With each new timelessness the dream's defeat,
Before this restless dial of the heart
Shall ease its revolutions and we part.

WINIFRED ADAMS BURR.

DEATH AND SLEEP

SHOULD we fear Death? Nay rather might we dread
That counterfeit of death we label Sleep
Which steals from us the qualities we keep
Most sacred in the day, and on our bed
Leaves our defenceless spirit less than dead.

Distrust not death, but rather let us weep
For sleeping souls from whose subconscious deep
Vague forms which leer and gibber raise their head.

Each night we strive with hope undimmed by use
To grasp the prize which death alone bestows,
Sleep gives no certainty of rest from strife,
Merely a short and ineffectual truce;
And morning finds us spoiled of our repose
To face the strange hostility of life.

J. C. LYTH.

SHAKESPEARE ANSWERS THE SCHOLARS

I AM the enigma of the earth,
(My bones lie under the stone)
The reticent sonneteer,
The poet without peer.
I am the townsman of simple birth
Whose bones lie under the stone;
The phoenix and the mystery
And the coarse fool am I:
I am the man of mirth,
(My bones lie under the stone)
The wild spirit of sorrow
And the ghost that none shall know.

They search but they shall not find;
(Only the words live on)
My life had little to tell
Either of ill or well;
My deeds were in my mind,
(Only the words live on)
Far off, my life, the poet
Has almost forgotten it;
But remembers the river, the wind,
(Only my words live on)
Snow, and gables awry,
And the church wherein I lie.

CLARA LANYON LANYON.

PROXIMITY

AMIDST the guarded treasures of my mind
There linger memories of those I love:
What are those memories, if not to prove
The nearness of the dead? . . . for I shall find
Their spirit voices in the cooling wind,
Affection's smile in many an autumn grove.
Within the confines of this earth I rove
But they shall walk with me, our hopes entwined.

They dwell untrammelled by the cords of space
Though far outflung shall streams of stars aspire;
All things are living, nothing can efface
The least that God has made—so I shall sing
The glories of the cosmic plan, the fire
That never smoulders and eternal spring!

ARTHUR LYNNFORD-SMITH.

INVOCATION

COME then, loved leafage, Contemplation,
And draw my soul into your dark repose;
Come Thought, and with your folded wings dispose
The shell that now my earthly self puts on;

Come Soul, and leap towards Perception,
Though in the thicket, Grief, still hide Love's Rose;
Eternity will open and Earth close,
While I another step through Death have won;

For only there can Ecstasy be found,
When the flung soul dares Heaven's mysteries,
And up and on through Truth and Beauty pressed,
Seeking through earthly beauty that Profound
Beyond the bourne of Sense and Time, that lies
Across the tideless waters of the Blest.

MARJORIE STUART BARROW.

THE MAN COLERIDGE

FEW great poets provide us with so clear a Portrait of the Artist as does Coleridge.

My face, unless when animated by immediate eloquence, expresses great sloth, and great, indeed almost idiotic good nature. . . . As to my shape, 'tis a good shape enough if measured, but my gait is awkward, and the walk of the whole man indicates *indolence capable of energies*.

This is a remarkably fair picture in its way, but Coleridge bibliography has done little in the hundred years since his death to amplify it. This may be no bad thing. The solid mass of biographies, literary histories and " books about " most of our prominent literary figures is a real bar to our first-hand appreciation of them. At most we catch but odd glimpses of our hero flitting behind the shrubbery of irrelevent detail laboriously compiled by decade after decade of scholarship.

The case with Coleridge, however, is the exact opposite. Apart from Dykes Campbell's great work at the end of the last century, there has been very little reliable work done on the complete Coleridge, " of imagination all compact." We are left with this sharp little self-portrait of the man of *indolence capable of energies*, together with a relatively small body of poems of alarmingly uneven quality, drifting on a vortex of political idealism and romantic pantheism, of enormous personal passion and equally enormous intellect, of nightmares and German transcendental philosophy.

It is not surprising that we absorb *Kubla Khan*, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel* and leave it at that. The collation of the mass of secondary writings that Coleridge left—all intensely lively, epigrams and letters, literary criticism, political journalism, philosophical treatises, —is a task for a great scholar. Hence the value of the new " biographical study " by one of the finest living scholars of English literature—Professor E. K. Chambers' *Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (O.U.P., 18s.). Considering its scope, the book is a short one. Its aim is not that of a comprehensive documented *Life ;* it aims, by absorbing the large amount of new data that has arisen in the fifty years since Campbell's work,

to bring Coleridge criticism up to date. It is a step forward of half a century ; and with the assurance of being entirely reliable, it combines the interest of a straightforward chronicle of the development of Coleridge, the man and his works.

With his usual immaculate lucidity, Professor Chambers states, and by stating solves, the problem of this genius self-called " sloth-jaundiced all " :

> Coleridge's failure to make good was primarily due to a fundamental instability of character. He had dreamed of the permanent, but had lived wholly in the present, talking brilliantly and incessantly, and snatching at every will-o'-the-wisp interest which a vivid imagination suggested to him. He could not integrate his life, and when troubles, for which he was not wholly responsible, came upon him, he had no reserve of endurance to make head against them. His gift of introspection gave him a whisper of this.

For the still unsated Coleridge lover a further book, greater in weight and equal in importance, has been published simultaneously with this. *The Life of S. T. Coleridge*, by Lawrence Hanson (Allen and Unwin, 21s.), claims justifiably to be " the opening and self-contained part of the first comprehensive life of Coleridge ever written." It deals with what are generally considered Coleridge's most important years as a poet : those prior to his residence in the Lake district in 1800. The finished work should certainly supersede Dykes Campbell's briefer *Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (which was only intended as anticipation of a complete *Life*) as the standard work. Attractively set out and fully documented, it is indeed the " everything shop " for the Coleridge student.

It is easier to appreciate than to gauge the effect of the work of Chambers and Hanson. They have made available a considerable amount of information which previously could only be obtained by prolonged grubbing in literary dustbins. Yet although we are now informed of the most minute of Coleridge's movements, we remain unfamiliar with the tone, the movement and the smell of the thoughts and actions of the world in which he lived. The French Revolution, the Romantic Movement and the New Industrialism give some sort of setting ; but only by unwrapping the parcels to which these tags are attached can we see the

full significance of Coleridge's thoughts, or, what is more directly to our purpose, feel the full appreciation of that larger body of his poetry which, unlike his three masterpieces, does not transcend all these circumstantial details.

A study of Coleridge in relation to his times, to that " life's dazzle " that tortured but did not blind him, is a piece of work waiting to be done. Meanwhile, it may be worth while to look briefly at Coleridge's poetry, as a whole, for signs of the seething life around him.

It is easy to overstress the turbulence of life in his time. Life is always seething; the "period of change" is always. What gives importance to Coleridge's comments on the subject is that, during his youth, that turbulent organic alteration that goes on perpetually in the normally transient elements of life and society was also showing considerable effect on the more permanent institutions, such as Christian religious belief, the oligarchical-nationalist state, and the classical standards of literary criticism. Later in his life, about the turn of the century, the ideals which had produced these revolutions were reabsorbed into the wider humdrum turmoil of life, the seething sank to a lower level, and so consequently did his poetry, in that it was a commentary upon it.

This explains the break with Wordsworth, who renounced the world of " change and decay " for the permanence of nature. Coleridge, at the advent of Wordsworth and his doctrine in 1797, similarly turned to nature for permanence ; but could not stick it. Even at the height of his enthusiasm it only provided for him a static backcloth before which his images of the passing world could flit to greater dramatic advantage. After all, one cannot live long in the two-dimensional world of a backcloth. The inanimate soon tired Coleridge ; it was bloodless, senseless ; it had to be animated by his own effort, and when this flagged, all failed :

> O Lady ! we receive but what we give,
> And in our life alone does nature live :
> Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud !
> And would we aught behold, of higher worth,

Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth—

The earliest influence upon Coleridge was a literary one. Addicated most of his life to drugs, in his childhood he got drunk with words. The little Samuel Taylor who acted what he had read among the nettles of the churchyard found that words held not only sense but music. The little Samuel Taylor who was a prey to nightmares found in their expression a sense that had the ecstasy of music, a music that made a rarified other-worldly sense. These were the influences that later produced *Kubla Khan*, *The Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*. They arose naturally within the port; had no connection with the world around him, as his secondary poems have.

The next influence, also literary, acted on a lower plane. When the infant Samuel was twelve Dr. Johnson died, and with him the high standard of criticism to which eighteenth-century " neo-classical " poetry had been subjected. What a falling-off was there Coleridge soon noticed. The school of Erasmus Darwin, at the height of its popularity at the end of the 'eighties, stank in his nostrils. He saw the absurdity of *The Botanic Garden*, of :

Hence when a Monarch or a mushroom dies,
Awhile extinct the organic matter lies;
But, as a few short hours or years resolve,
Alchemic powers the changing mass dissolve;
Born to new life unnumbered insects pant,
New buds surround the microscopic plant.

This was poetry within the bounds of eighteenth-century criticism; but it was obviously not the work of a poet. Henceforward Coleridge turned his attention from " what is poetry? " to " what is a poet? "—This is the mainspring of his literary criticism.

The first poet he found links him immediately with the early Romantics. Johnson's opinion of Collins is well known and decisive. But Collins already had admirers, not least William Lisle Bowles. The sonnets of Bowles

effected Coleridge deeply. They summed up for him what he considered poetry ought to be. The most interesting in this connection is that *On a Beautiful Landscape :*

> Beautiful landscape ! I could look on thee
> For hours, unmindful of the storm and strife
> And mingled murmurs of tumultuous life. . . .

Here was music, and Coleridge's verse was already sufficiently stuffed with music to produce: "We snore quartettes in ecstasy of nose."

In Bowles also was feeling, that sense above sense. Coleridge learnt from this that poetry must have feeling. The early poem " To Feeling " shows how much this was in tune with his inclination: "The rebel Feeling riots at my heart ! " More important still was the final couplet of this sonnet of Bowles :

> Then gaze again, that shadowed scenes may teach
> Lessons of peace and love, beyond all speech.

This was the lesson that Wordsworth was to try to make him remember later ; that—

> Better than such discourse doth silence long,
> Long barren silence, square with my desire ;
> To sit without emotion, hope or aim,
> In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,
> And listen to the flapping of the flame,
> Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.

But meanwhile the " mingled murmurs of tumultuous life " engulfed Coleridge, and he never completely emerged from them. They are divisible under three main heads : Godwin ; the French Revolution ; rheumatism.

His knowledge of philosophical writings already was enormous. He wrote to Thelwall : " I have read almost everything. I am *deep* in all out-of-the-way books. . . . Metaphysics and poetry and ' facts of the mind ' are my darling studies." He had a " marvellous power of apprehension " of the metaphysics of Plotinus, the neo-Platonists, of Spinoza, of Jacob Böhme and the German transcendentalists, of Hartley—and later of Godwin. This apprehension could not but darken and confuse the issues of his mind.

Then came the French Revolution, with an upflare of

ideals of liberty and a new order of humanity—over all Europe and England. Coleridge was romantic enough to enthuse more than most. His resulting hatred of Pitt was immediate and permanent. It was in 1794 that he wrote the sonnet to *Yon dark scowler;* years later, when he himself had lost the ideals that begot this first hatred, he was still rending the unfortunate statesman in newspaper articles. Certainly he had become disillusioned in the meantime. He had too great an intellect not to see the bones behind the smooth face of his romantic idealism. He was forced back upon Godwinism and on Wordsworth's belief in a state of Nature which could never be to Coleridge—

> A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
> The pleasure which there is in life itself.

How greatly his poems gain in attraction in the light of this knowledge! The *Ode to France* gains strength, when regarded in the light of his temporary reconciliation to life through this new-found trust in the permanent sympathy of Nature; likewise *Dejection* when seen as the heart-breaking relinquishing of this last hope:

> A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
> A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
> Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
> In word, or sigh, or tear—

As for the rheumatism, too much has been said of that already by other writers. Thanks to Dr. Beddoes and Dr. Gillman, and to one thing and another, he spent a considerable part of his life in a state of "elastic health." He was a spasmodic rather than a chronic invalid, and not perpetually under the influence of drugs. Rather than directly to the ill, it is due to the perpetual vacillation between stupor and activity that his work is of such sporadic nature. That *indolence* was not *capable of* sustained *energies*. Hence the fragmentary character of his work. Taking this into account, the brilliance of the epigrams of his later years shines more brightly. The great crises of Revolution and Romanticism were over. His own anguish had abated into the self-indulgent verbosity of the "sage of Highgate," into the almost-peace of his one superb late poem, *Youth and*

Age. His poetry had no longer to fight against the standards of a previous age nor laud those of the present. The seething of life had returned subterranean ; all that was needed was witty and feeling comment. Life was running as usual, and *The Morning Post* wanted copy. Hence the epigrams, curiously satisfying, especially that " On Donne's Poetry " :

> With Donne, whose muse on dromedary trots,
> Wreathe iron pokers into true-love knots ;
> Rhyme's sturdy cripple, fancy's maze and clue,
> Wit's forge and fire-blast, meaning's press and screw.

These are just a few suggestions of ways in which Coleridge's essential liveliness can be set in motion again. " He had dreamed of the permanent, but had lived wholly in the present,"—it would be worth a scholar's time to go more fully into this " present " ; not into its factual details, which have now been well enough covered, but into the atmospheric density surrounding the minor poems. Or perhaps we should gain more by investigating each for ourselves.

Coleridge has told us a little directly and an enormous amount indirectly about himself ; modern scholarship has collected and collated it. But really to understand him, really to appreciate the greater part of his poetry, we must catch the breath of the life he lived.

JOHN ELLIOT.

THOUGHTS

OUR thoughts
Are winging entities.
Weighed down with hidden potency
We launch them on their certain course ;
Discerning not the awful might
That lurks alert to bless or blast.
In ill or kindly mould we fling
Our freighted concepts forth. They speed,
They strike and, swerving as they fall,
Sweep back to lie before our feet.
Exact realities,
Thoughts live.

FREDERICK MYERS.

ELIZABETH I

PROUDLY she stood among her maids-in-waiting,
Viewing the freighting
Of the white sea-bound fleet;
She saw a gold-encumbered merchant, rating
With spreading parchment sheet
The rich emoluments in his receipt;
The "Golden Hind"
She saw returning treasure-lined
With silver bars
And silks and scents and fans and ivory jars.

Full queenly robed she sat, her beauty spending
In speech unending,
And Signors of Spain,
Red with amaze retired, their high heads bending
To hear her entertain
Their Court Ambassador in Roman strain,
But when in spring
She saw the morning meadows glistening,
Buttercup flame
So pleased her, she forbore to latinize its name.

She spurred our English miles through apple valleys.
And London alleys
And the resilient down,
Pleased with unlettered praise and loyal sallies;
Queen of the bell-hung town
She swayed through Lambeth as the sun went down,
The torch-lit Thames
Grew dim before her gems
And all men's breath
Quickened before "ruff-bastioned Elizabeth."

But the illustrious age of dreaming men
Broadened beyond her ken,
And gave small time to see
The splendour from her peak in Darien;
For her there could not be
Horizons purple-crowned of a wide sea;—
Yet in her day
She held Pacific sway
From a high hill
Of queenly wisdom and impenetrable skill.

I. SUTHERLAND GROOM.

WHY HAVE YOU COVERED MY FACE?

FROM his tumbled bed
The sick man knew the world endlessly turning,
Revolving between these four narrow walls,
So that the sun rose in him
And the sly moon fell.

On his dry tongue
The milk from the dull green glass was curdled, sour.
His hands
Lay still and drained on the sheet like blue-veined sticks ;
But his heart throbbed madly,
Rebellious, wild,
Striving to rise in a throat ringed with metal,
Held by his failing flesh.

Over all the room
Dust lay like a sheet of dark ice frozen in solitude.
" What is Good ? " he said, " And Evil, what ?
They are twin seeds lying side by side in the same pod,
And the space between
Is a single slender scale from the wing of a night moth.
And of all things Death alone is final, perfect—
But there is no perfection : so there can be no death."

Heavy the night with doom : each hour
Seemed swollen, so that it hardly moved,
And Time was the tick of a clock spinning endlessly out.

In the east
A man with a brush had splashed a rib of red,
And the sky grew streaked
With a surge of crimson bright as pain in the heart.
He remembered
How many times he had tried to set it down
And failed : how he had slashed his canvas madly and flung it aside.
In his parched mouth
A bitter saliva spurted beneath his acid tongue,
As he thought of all he had tried to do, how little done. . . .
And his heart was seized with a savage yearning
For yet one chance more.

He heard the call of the sea as a far restless murmur
Where the light waves broke in foam over weedy rocks ;

Freely spending their beauty, asking naught in return.
" Thus should we live ! " he thought, " Thus ! "
Sparing nothing, but living Life to the full.

He could feel the chill of the night air on salt flesh,
And a woman's body against his, so that fear was become delicious :
The moon wove shrouds of the pale moss on the trees,
Where mosquitoes whined in the blackness, thin and shrill as ghosts ;
There was death on their lips—the death they had brought him now.
He could see a dull red mark on his bare arm,
Could hear his own voice in the darkness, laughing, then suddenly thick,
" Not me ! It could never happen to me ! "
And beneath his savage hands she winced and cried out,
Then lay still in his arms at last.

Now he seemed in the stillness to start on a far journey :
An unknown hand
Tore body and soul apart, in a moment's agony
Like a thousand searing needles,
So that he was no longer complete, whole,
But merged with the shadows.
His own voice rang in his ears, yet no sound came.

The woman stooped, and her tears fell slowly, scalding,
On her lingering hands.
Impatient, he said :
" My face ! Dolores, why have you covered my face ? "

M. EDGELOW.

A member of the Poets' Fellowship writes : " In renewing my annual subscription may I say how much I have enjoyed both THE POETRY REVIEW and attending the meetings in Russell Square. I have been writing verse at intervals for ten years and putting it away in my desk because I did not know what to do with it. One or two attempts to place poems with magazines were quite unsuccessful. None of my friends write verse, so that I have not been able even to ' talk poetry ' with them. It was a Miss Blackie (daughter of the publishers of children's and school books) who told me about The Poetry Society, for which I shall be ever grateful to her. The value of the REVIEW and other privileges of membership is so far above the small fee that one pays—a fee arranged, one feels, in thoughtful consideration for would-be poets who are proverbially low in funds."

BEAUTY

BEAUTY has many faces.
Where she dwells
I cannot tell,
There are so many places
Where her spells
She works in secret:
On the lonely fells,
Where moonlight traces
Deep shadows by the rocks;
The mossy dells
Where babbling water races
Among the ferns;
Or on the smooth, shore-sand,
Where white sea-shells
Gleam in the sun.
Her work is never done.
Sun, moon and stars,
Fields, woods and flowers,
Her constant servitors.
She dreams her hours away
By meadow-streams,
Slow-winding, willow-haunted.
Undaunted, she will scale the icy crest
Of Matterhorn, majestic Everest,
Brooding in that vast, silent solitude,
On the rude elements, that, unsubdued,
Retain their native virtue,
Wild, untamed,
Shamed to no servitude,
Cold, wind, frost, hail,
Ice, snow, no will can bend,
Save that of their creator,
Nature, bold
Conspirator with Beauty
To o'erthrow
The granite fortress of the heart of man.

Beauty is everywhere:
Carving domed clouds out of the azure air;
Riding the crest of the green, running wave,
To break in foam of thunder on the shore;
On the sea-floor, where the bright corals grow
And many-coloured fishes to and fro

Dart with a flick, quick flick of fin or tail,
In the cool twilight depths beyond the gale
Whose fury-lashes trouble the dark sea ;
By the mill pool, beside the turning wheel,
We feel her presence, stealing through the dusk
To pluck a musk-rose from its slender stem.
She gems the morning grasses with her dew,
There, where she passes,
Brings a strange, changed world,
With a curled frond unfurled to the heaven's blue,
Or sings to the heart
With the sunlight quivering on a song-bird's wings

Beauty informs all life,
Strife, peace, storms, calms ;
The fronded palms that fringe the lonely beach
Of some forgotten, far Pacific isle ;
The tortured branches of the twisted oak
Against a rain-swept, sombre-clouded sky,
Broken and wild, with jagged lightnings rent ;
The scent of a rose, the sun-born butterfly,
Dyed with the colours of her flaming sire ;
Fire, crimson-hearted, in the friendly grate ;
Great cataracts, sheer-falling down the steep
To spend themselves in billowing clouds of spray ;
Deep gorges, river-cloven ; mountains bleak ;
Sleek panthers in the jungle-tangled growth ;
Green lawns of peace where leaping fountains play ;
Dawn, sunset, starlight, twilight, prime of day.
They are her voices, speaking out her mind
To our blind understanding, bodying forth
A symbol of her own divinity,
Invisible, intangible,
Too bright for our weak eyes, too tremulous
For our hand's touch, for our dulled ears too faint,
Too tenuous, for our heart's ease too awful
In her undimmed majesty.

Beauty, form-mother, shaping to her mould
Matter and spirit, turning dross to gold,
Weaving light-patterns from the very dust
The foot despises, the dulled heart surprises
With glimpses of immortal loveliness

In this our mortal world : the soft, curled tresses
Of a slumbering child; mild mother-love,
Stronger than wind or wave, that presses
No claim but service ; lissome maidenhood,
Of birch-tree grace, face apple-blossom fresh,
Flesh firm, eyes bright, right for dear passion's bed
With some fair lad, strong-limbed and equal hearted ;
The virile pride of lusty fatherhood ;
The artist's vision and the poet's dream ;
The sculptor's power, the soldier's bravery,
The grave philosopher's intricacies
Of ordered thought, a mind-wrought synthesis,
Fusing confusion to a single theme
Of flawless reason, lawless law-controlled ;
Bold saints who dare contumely for the sake
Of the clear truth they see, but all men scorn.

All these, of Beauty born, shaped, made aware,
Declare her excellence, eternally
Throned in the heart of God, secure, sublime,
Beyond the reach of fate or the assault of time.

W. R. Latham.

PHYLLIS

IS this then the end of her living, the fruit of her toil?
They have lowered her body to nourish the life-giving soil ;
She is not here where the light wind is fitfully blowing,
She is not here where the trees and the thin grass are growing,
She has no part in this dear earth turning in space,
Nor in the starry universe has she a place.
Where did she flee to so suddenly during the night ?
Is there some refuge to shelter her flickering light,
Or is it quenched ? Or does she wander in vain
Seeking through time and space to find us again ?
O little faith, so easily weakened and clouded !
O little love, so secret and heavily shrouded !
If she is not, then God is a myth and a lie,
And she was never alive, nor able to die.
O Fool, to fear that Death had taken the whole,
As though dividing germs could poison a soul !
Be comforted; the God of thy desire
Shall shelter thee from truth's appalling fire.

Geoffrey Dobbs.

THE BOUQUET

TO-DAY, in a land urgent with plover voices, golden with lark-song,
In a young world new-ravished with leaves,
I have gathered beauty:
All day I have found strange beauty
Because of the heart's enchantment,
As the wind is changed to music in the hollow reeds of Pan.
I was stayed in a white-gold ecstasy of gulls' wings
Long and long,
To weave for you a bouquet in words.
Marsh-gold I chose for you; and blossom, moon-white and fragile;
Young leaves, delicate and wild as the notes of a wood-wind,
And the splintered spears that sunlight thrusts between.
I chose hill shadows, like wet violets, for coolness,
And the torn lace of the tree shadows,
And dim water shadows, dreamlike and changing.
I threaded them with the crying of birds
And the colours that evening throws across the waters:
And I brought them to you at dusk.
But you had found larger beauty—
Endeavour, and rich thought-patterns, and majesty,
And the intricate rhythms of human life,
And I saw my gift as a tired child's flowers
That droop and fall from the hands and are forgotten.

DOROTHY MARGARET PAULIN.

DIVES AND LAZARUS

WHY should we marvel that the two, those neighbours,
The enemy immense fierce cancelling states,
Hail and go near remaining Hell and Heaven:

Are globes the pitiful or thirsty eye
Encircles, leans upon, but cannot pierce—
Hard, unabsorbing, clenched, withheld, entire?

Consider the one small and moatless heart:
Have not red depths of pain there howled across
To past peace for the merest cooling flake,

A least, light, flavoured touch, and been denied?
Has not, on peaks of quiet, memory
Shut fast round lurid hell her unsinged hand?

N. K. CRUICKSHANK.

CREDO

THE skies were dark; the pain, the cruelty
Of man on fellow man, the panoply
Of armèd multitudes in serried file
Oppressed my soul. Is not the whole world vile
(I mused) and all it nourishes? We find—
Or deem it so—in Man the noblest mind,
More near to heaven and yet more close to hell;
Is he alone rebellious? As he fell,
Fell not the beasts who slay, as Cain of old
Who smote his brother at the dawn? Behold,
Beast preys on beast and, on rapacious wings,
Bird on his brother bird; the ivy clings
With slow-death-dealing fingers on the tree,
Her sister of the forest; suddenly
Earth shrugs her shoulder and destruction brings
On teeming cities, from her bowel flings
Terror of fiery death; th'uncertain sea
Batters a helpless ship or, craftily,
With evil eddies unsuspected lures
A swimmer to his doom. The curse endures
Through all the universe; the earth we tread
Feeds on our lifeless bodies, of the dead
She builds her loveliness; in sullen skies
Behind the clouds the lightning treacherous lies
To speed her fatal shaft, as spiders wait
In webbèd secrecy; deliberate
The slow floods ooze and drown.
In blackest mood
So did my spirit muse, and all the good
I hoped and knew seemed vain, an empty breath
That echoed in the corridors of death.

Weary of soul and sad of heart I turned
To look where splendour of the sunset burned
And waned to twilight: in the dusk afar
I found, scarce visible, a lonely star;
And with her rising to my spirit came
Once more the light of hope, a tender flame
Clear in the darkness, and a faith within
That grew to knowledge; though the whole world sin
Still beauty lives; in cruelty's despite
There still is kindliness; in deepest night
Love speeds to comforting; I still could find—

Nor hold a doubt—in Man the noblest mind,
Marked with the sign of God, more near to hell
For that he mounts to heaven; as he fell,
So may he rise again, serene and bold,
Scarred with experience, as Cain of old.
Beast preys on beast, but still the terrier's eyes
Are big with faithfulness; though in the skies
Bird preys on bird, yet still the thrushes sing
And brood in motherhood; on eager wing
The swift bees labour; in the garden blows,
Despite the thorn, the fragrance of the rose;
Still brings the sea new joy to laughing lips
And bears the burden of a thousand ships
From shore to shore; from April skies again
There falls the blessing of the silver rain
And wonder of the dew; the earth we tread
Brings resurrection from the dust; the dead
Shall wake to loveliness.
There is no death
In all the universe; in Nature's breath
God's spirit dwells. These pass: the sin, the pain;
Eternal life, eternal love, remain.

REGINALD C. EVA.

STORM-SURF IN MOONLIGHT

BREAKERS in waves of storm-breaking!
Surf rushing white over surf!
White-boiling of maddened whiteness,
Massed above snow-mass on mass
Of wave!

Mountains of water, piled mounting!
Strength of surge-tumult strengthening!
Swell of abortive wave's swelling.
Pound down, in down-pounding
Of weight!

Clear in still-clarity of clearness!
Spanned by dark-vaulted spanning!
Light-shine! pencilled in silver lighting,
Quiet penetrant, storm-cutting quiet
Of light, of control
Blessing tumult, turbulent!—Aggressive!

ETHEL M. STEPHENSON.

SPAN-FOOT VERSE

2. Stroke-Flick (— ,)

STROKE-FLICK verse is very rare in English; it is not used for the "measured" (or metric) expression of more than 5 per cent. of our verse, as contrasted with the more than 90 per cent. of Flick-Stroke in our verse, and as noted in the January issue of The Poetry Review.

Yet in Anglo-Saxon times *Stroke-Flick* was a favourite mode of verse expression, dating from the pagan times when the sturdy, not to say aggressive, spirit of our ancestors burst forth in "strokes," followed by one or two "flicks," and it not only stressed the strokes with loud tones of voice, with strong gestures of hand or foot to mark the time, but also with a reinforcement of alliteration, as the scops or bards improvised or recited their poems at the gatherings.

But when Roman missionaries came to convert the English to Christianity, they brought with them somewhat of Latin "culture," including "iambics" for verse expression; these in plain English are lines of flick-stroke verse; and the dominant influence of Stroke-Flick spirit began to weaken. Then came the Norman Domination to reinforce the Flick-Stroke style of verse, and to ruin the superiority of Stroke-Flick by clipping off the inflexional endings of thousands of our words. So tragic was this loss that to-day it is almost impossible to make a poem in pure Stroke-Flick; our mutilated vocabulary will not allow of an adequate fusion of Spans of Thought with Feet of Sound, in Stroke-Flick, though, as we saw, it will still allow a perfect fusion in Flick-Stroke.

A glance at the types shown in the January issue as basic for (, —) will convince us that none of the thousands of examples concerned are available for (— ,) verse, as the *beat* would always fall in the wrong place. But since there is an impelling necessity for the use of these examples in all forms of composition, whether poetry or prose, it follows that any so-called Trochaic or Stroke-Flick verse in English must abound in disturbances of the rhythm. In other words, there must be frequent crossdraw between Sound and Sense, resulting in a sacrifice of either.

The examples of (— ,) verse with which most of us are familiar are probably in the form of nursery rimes or hymns:

a. Twinkle twinkle Little Star.
b. Onward Christian Soldiers.

Such examples of perfect first lines might mislead us into thinking that the (— ,) rhythm might be made to ring clearly throughout: but in both cases the rhythm breaks down in the next line, for the Sense refuses to keep "in step" with the Sound; and the rhythm of the phrase is dominant to the rhythm of the syllables in our verse. In illustration, let us divide the lines into spans of thought and mark the syllables for feet of sound:

	(— ,)	:	(— ,)	:	(— ,)	:	(—)
a.	Twinkle	/	twinkle	/	Little	/	Star

(— ,) (— ,) (— ,) (—)
How / I wonder / what / you are

b. (— ,) — , — ,
Onward / Christian / Soldiers
(— ,) (— ,) (—)
Marching / as / to war

Other attempts may break down even in the first line, as with "Humpty Dumpty."

In striking contrast with the difficulty poets find in trying to make stroke-flick verse, was the ease with which their Anglo-Saxon forefathers made it, even when they thought they were speaking or writing prose. As an example, let us take a few phrases from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and note how inevitably the loss of inflexional endings will destroy a stroke-flick rhythm.

Aerest / waeron / buend / thisses / landes / Brettas
First were dwellers in these lands Britons

Comon. / aerest / threo / scipu
Came first three ships

Similarly a later example from Aelfric gives us :

Aefter / thissum / (heo) / ferde / into / anre / byrig
After this she went into a town

Furthermore, when the Latin hymns in Trochaic (Stroke-Flick) metre were translated into English, the translators found it easier to abandon the metre and to fall into the Iambic (Flick-Stroke) :

Dies irae dies illa.
Solvet saeclum in favilla.

Here it is interesting to note that Scott's rendering of the above lines contains a hark-back to the original movement, but it appears in the form of three double strokes, thus getting the stress both ways :

That day of wrath, *that dread*ful day,
*When heav*en and earth shall pass away.

Herein lies the key to the tendency of a Latin (— ,) to change over into an English (, —). The Latin words have the root or *stroke* meaning in the first of two syllables, and the relational meaning in the second ; but the English words have the reverse ; hence the change over of the stress in the rhythm :

— , — , , — , —
Di - es ir - ae × The day of wrath

It is either the failure to recognize this tendency, or the lack of technical skill to deal adequately with it, that has prevented our poets making a technical success of (— ,) movement in their verse. In illustration we may take a specific case, that of *Hiawatha*. Here the very title gives the key to an appropriate rhythm ; so does the translation :

— , — , — , — ,
Hi-a wath-a Run-ning wat - er

Here is a perfect example of fusion of Sense and Sound, of Spans of Thought with Feet of Sound, alluringly easy to begin; but impossible to follow without continually recurring sacrifice of either Sense or Sound. Hence a Reader is faced with a constant dilemma; if he avoids breaking the rhythm he is forced to give a "yokel's stress" to such weak flicks as *the*, *in*, *on*, *at*, etc.

Among other perfect First Lines may be noted the following:

Jesus tender Shepherd hear me	
Ruin seize thee, ruthless king	Gray
Tiger, Tiger, burning bright	Blake
Under hemlocks tenfoot high	Hodgson
Rarely rarely comest thou	Shelley

It is interesting to note how various poets have dealt with the problem of sustaining a true (— ,) movement; most of them appear to feel the difficulty involved, and simply let either vocabulary or phrase break through the metric pattern as needs arise; in other words they sacrifice sound to sense, often needlessly for lack of better technique. Most of them courageously return to the original pattern at the beginning of nearly every line, but let it trail away again at the first obstacle. Such a plan, or "happening," has given us much delightful verse: but such verse plays havoc with young ears that are opening to the "feeling" of sustained rhythm. It blurs definition: it may deceive a beginner into believing that "warped pronunciation" may be normal, for verse, and so recognizing the claim to a "poetic diction."

As examples for such study, might be recommended for young students the following poems:

Take oh take those lips away	Shakespeare
Queen and huntress chaste and fair	Jonson
Shall I wasting in despair	Wither
Duncan Gray cam here to woo	Burns
Waken Lords and Ladies gay	Scott
Nobly nobly Cape St. Vincent	Browning
Stately Spanish galleons coming from the Isthmus	Masefield

Beautiful as all these poems are, we must advert to the fact that none of them sustain the characteristic movement of (— ,) as well as might reasonably be expected. Still they compare favourably with "The Norman Baron" of Longfellow, in which there are 34 flicks to be stressed by the metre as if they were strokes, in a total of 64 lines, merely to keep up an *illusion* of (— ,)

The weakness of such technique as that noted above was one of the causes of the revolt of Whitman, Browning, and others, which led to the Free Verse movement for the abolition of the Dominant Rhythm. The destructive violence of this movement has now expended itself in such exhaustion as leaves it no energy available for constructive

effort; but in principle the movement was justified as a protest against the impotent puerilities in which the exponents of (— ,) and indeed (— , ,) had been indulging.

It is with a view to reconstruction that we are now considering the possibilities and the limits of (— ,). In the previous issue we claimed, and indeed demonstrated, that (, —) could be made in Span-Foot verse, with ideal fusion of Spans of Thought and Feet of Sound; also with ease. Now, however, we find that (— ,) cannot be sustained for more than a few lines at a time, for lack of adequate vocabulary and phraseology. Any attempt to make a poem in this movement might succeed as a "tour de force"; but even then it would move with disconcerting stiffness as contrasted with the ease of a similar attempt in (, —). For example:

TEMPESTS RAGING

Tempest	rages	over	water
Angry	billows	threaten	leaping
Fearful	shipmen	nerve them	tauter
Anxious	kinfolk	watch them	weeping
Jesus	*whispers*	*Stillness*	*reigns*
Warfare	smites us	wildly	sweeping
Shipmen	hurtle	bursting	shell
Airmen	murder	infants	sleeping
Landsmen	belch us	flaming	hell
Heaven	*watches*	*waxes*	*wanes*

(W.H.S.).

Are we then to despair of the possibility of (— ,) in pure form ever proving a success as the rhythm of an English poem? We must, if "stiffness" is an insuperable objection; though our Anglo-Saxon forefathers would not have rejected it on that count. Perhaps, however, among the rising generation of poets there are a few who will make the attempt to show that (— ,) in pure form can be made without stiffness, and so to succeed where I fail.

Is there no alternative? There must be. The rhythm is so characteristic of certain modes of thought and feeling that it should be used to express them, otherwise they lose force in weaker movements. It rings to the call for effort, struggle, battle, terror, daring, triumph. Men *march* to the rhythm of (— ,); they might *limp* to the rhythm of (, —). This vital contrast shows us that (— ,) is the natural form of expression for the dynamic of effort, as is (, —) for the static of repose; for example, it is expressed in the movement of *saw*ing, *plan*ing, as of *echo*, *pis*ton, etc. as contrasted with the still idea of "a saw, a plane," or of "the shout, the rod."

I think the alternative is that of writing in Span-Foot Verse *as closely as possible*; and this way may be made easier if the poet's being is throbbing with the characteristic movement of (— ,), in which

words of the characteristic type will tend to recur, such as :

coming, faithful, ready, able, arrow, greater,
passion, village, freely, pocket, chosen ,surest, etc.

Such words will restore the Dominant Rhythm (— ,) whenever it has been switched off; and if such are used for a weak-ending rime (— ,) the dominant lilt is more clearly sustained than it would be otherwise.

In illustration of (— ,) difficulties, and ways of overcoming them, here follows "*Whitethroat.*" We note that the title itself is a twin-stroke (— —); but as custom gives it a major stress on the first syllable it may still serve as an indication of the Measure (or metre). We see also that in many lines the sheer lack of suitable vocabulary in (— ,) has forced the rhythm into (, —). We find also that an additional (and unnecessary) handicap is that of the monosyllabic internal rime in lines 1 and 3, perhaps better avoided.

Where a monosyllable begins the line then rhythm trouble begins. If the monosyllable is a stroke (as throughout *Whitethroat*) the line begins with the normal stress, but the rhythm switches into (, —); it is however generally restored by a typical (— ,) word like "journey,' but perhaps lost again. But if the monosyllable is a flick (as often happens in other poems) and so upsets the rhythm at the beginning of the line, a recovery is still more difficult. Examples of a perfect recovery may however be occasionally found :

I am coming Little Maiden
With the pleasant sunshine laden

Here and elsewhere also one may note the value of a polysyllable in helping to restore the (— ,) movement :

Praise ascending ever higher.

Always in dealing with this movement we should remember that verse rhythm (which is song with words) cannot be judged as mere music (which is song without words), for every syllable has both sound and meaning which cannot be dissociated. Hence the need for a system of *Double Scansion*[1] in the critical appreciation of our verse.

[1] See my *Elements of English Verse* (Macmillan).

WHITETHROAT :

April showers and early flowers
Beckon Whitethroat back entreating ;
Over hedges, into sedges
Eager glances long for meeting ;
Welcome home at last,
Now with winter past.

When you flew your Journey through,
Heading northward, resting never,
Instinct showed the pathless road
Over dangers threatening ever ?

Higher Loving Care
Heard you yearning prayer?

Saw you fly with comrades by
Flocking swiftly over airway?
Cousins too, of greyer hue,
"Lesser Whitethroats" crowding fairway?
Cheerily enquiring
"*Are you hungry? Tiring?*"

Now I hear the calling clear
Patience waited for returning,
Keening sight, you lilting Sprite,
Filling hearts with April yearning,
Churring cold away,
Opening flowers of May.

Ah! I note the snowy throat
Flaunting tints of rosy red;
Ashen grey and golden clay
Mingle magic overhead;
Glancing whiteness showing,
Happy redness glowing. W. H. STEPHENS.

The influence which Shakespeare's poetry has on international goodwill and understanding was discussed by Sir Archibald Flower, of the Stratford-on-Avon Memorial Theatre, at a meeting. It was sometimes not realized, he said, what a great hold Shakespeare had on the minds of people throughout the world. His popularity could not be attributed to the beauty of his lines alone, because 95 per cent. of the people who read Shakespeare read him after he had been translated into their own language. Rather was his popularity due to his marvellous knowledge of human nature, his wide sympathy, and his glorious sense of humour. Sir Archibald described a lecture tour which he had recently made through twelve European countries, and he told of the extraordinary interest that people took in hearing about Shakespeare, even in remote cities like Helsingfors and Tallinn. In Germany he believed that there was more enthusiasm amongst ordinary people for seeing Shakespeare's plays even than existed in England. More than any other man he had been an international influence in drawing nations together in a spirit of friendship, anxious to experience and appreciate what another member of the society described as "the fundamental, beautiful things of life—music, drama, and poetry."

Shakespeare was called as a witness of Anglo-Italian understanding and as an incentive to new friendship in a broadcast from Rome. The voice of the broadcaster ended by invoking the closing lines of the last Act of Cymbeline—with emphasis on "Let a Roman and a British ensign wave friendly together."

A POET PASSES

A VERY long time ago, in the Kingdom of Ireland, the whole nation from "the king in his chair of gold" to the humblest subject in beggar's cloak, lamented the passing away of a great poet; for in those bygone centuries poets ranked as high as kings. And now, as I read in *The Spectator*, that all who knew W. B. Yeats felt as if a king had died—he was kingly in his art.

I well remember his tall, erect, I might add imperial, figure in Dublin, wrapped in a cloak, and wearing a black trilby hat, which some people declared he wore in emulation of Lord Tennyson; others that it was on account of his sympathies with the extreme nationalists, as the hat was a distinctive mark of the Fenians. As a matter of fact, in the days of his childhood, when rifles were being served out to the Orangemen, he thought he would like to die fighting the Fenians, and it was a stable-boy employed by his grandfather in Sligo who had a book of Orange rhymes, and when they read them together they gave him, as he said, the pleasure of rhyme for the first time.

It is a significant fact that his romantic temperament began to assert itself, when he was a pupil at the school in Hammersmith, and although he had no politics he took a romantic pride in belonging to a dangerous country where landlords were being shot, and the land war was at its height.

Years afterwards he met quite by accident the old Fenian John O'Leary, and he looked upon that handsome old man as a strangely romantic figure who had been set free after five years penal servitude, and who was still a collector of second-hand books, particularly upon Irish subjects which thrilled him as in the old days when he had been stirred to action by the poems of Thomas Davis and the Young Irelanders. Young Yeats, who had learned of his many adventures and vicissitudes, regretted the lost romance for which the old patriot had fought; and after he had died sang for his requiem

Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

Before O'Leary's death he had composed that exquisite poem, *The Secret Rose*.

Yeats had styled himself the last of the romantics and as somebody wrote "he seemed to be staring into a world of beauty which only he himself could see." He had always laid great stress upon the music of words in richly wrought poetry under the pre-Raphaelite influence, and what some had regarded as impossible, he had woven poetic patterns out of the airy texture of dreams. Later he changed all that beauty of metaphor and splendour of language; likewise forsaking the influence of the French Symbolists, and followed Landor and Donne. Then followed those verses that were "like a tightened bow," stripped of all verbal trappings, as someone wrote, "they not only walked naked, but at times, even several danced in their bones."

When he reached fifty there came another change as he sought a new

method, and after struggling with a fresh form of poetic treatment in accordance with our times, being the development of metaphysical poetry, which is intricate, but that growing interest in obscurities, and difficulties in following untrodden paths, had the effect of his winning the praise of many critics. Desmond MacCarthy writes in the *Sunday Times*: "Among the moods he has expressed with a unique enduring charm in his later verse are a cold and beautiful melancholy associated with old age and an exultant poetic arrogance."

It has been said that up to the time of his death his poetry had become increasingly intellectual; he himself maintained that as the body ages the imagination becomes stronger, but, as David Garnett says in *The New Statesman*, "owing to his late flowering Yeats's greatness is only recognized by a few." And *The Scotsman* pays him tribute by saying that "his poetry will live not because it is a reflection of the world large and generous in its instincts, but because it is intense and compelling, the image of a wonderful personality."

His first book of poems was published in 1886, and a critic had written that "when he writes a poem his style is so beautiful that one is forced to listen." The *Wanderings of Usheen* he wrote when he was twenty-four. In his early days he was a slow worker, but his rate of production quickened as he grew older. A few years ago he could compose seven or eight lines a day, and the same output in previous years would have occupied him a week. At that period music in poetry was his principal objective, and he used to recite with musical intonation his verses during their composition in order to test their cadences upon the ear. A clerical friend of mine told me of some people he knew who were staying at the same hotel as Yeats heard him in an adjoining room thus declaiming aloud some new poem.

I heard him recite many of his poems, and have seen all his plays up to and including the adaptions from Sophocles. I made a study of his work, and have read almost everything he had published, and in addition to my first article that appeared in an Irish weekly, I have written several for THE POETRY REVIEW on his Plays, Poems and Sources of Inspiration, *A Full Moon in March*, *A Poet's Dream*, *The Herne's Egg* etc. In these I gave a purview of his work in poetry and drama, as well as reviewing his latest dramatic work and also poetry and prose.

It has recently been said that W. B. Yeats's greatness as a poet is only recognized by a few, and a critic mentions *Leda and the Swan* as an outstanding poem.

I quoted from it in my article on *A Vision*. It is wonderfully beautiful, and yet I remember when it first appeared in a new publication in Dublin, of which only one number was permitted to be issued, there was a storm of disapproval raised by the "unco good" on the grounds of its being indelicate. It was another triumph of the Philistines.

Only last summer he wrote a poem apart from those which have

appeared in *The London Mercury*—it has not been included in any volume—which expresses a wish to be buried in his last resting place in the graveyard of Drumcliffe, Co. Sligo, after being buried a year or so in the mountains cemetery, Rocquebrunc, France.

Irish poets, learn your trade,
Sing whatever is well made,
Scorn the sort now growing up
All out of shape from toe to top,
There unremembering hearts and heads
Base-born products of base beds.
. . . . .
Under bare Ben Bulben's head
In Drumcliffe Churchyard Yeats is laid,
An ancestor was rector there
Long years ago; a church stands near,
By the road an ancient cross,
No marble, no conventional phrase,
On limestone quarried near the spot
By his command these words are cut.
Cast a cold eye
On life on death.
Horseman pass by.

His personality has gone from our midst, a flame that had been fed from many sources, and by those outside voices which I have heard him refer to as having reached his inner consciousness. May it continue to illume like the ever burning lamp of the ancients, and never cease to burn throughout our lives, and those who come after.

H. T. HUNT GRUBB.

IN MEMORIAM: W. B. YEATS

You have gone hence, O Wizard of the West,
Your pipe is silent now,—awhile you sleep,
Leaving your Celtic faery world to weep,
Till you have ta'en your fill of liquid rest,
Within the sweetness of that Rose's breast—
Rose of the World—into whose heart must creep
All, who would into Heaven's glory leap,
To be renewed in heavenly Beauty blest.

For not in Avalon shall lie your head,
Nor in lake island dim of Innisfree;
No bean rows now about your corse shall be,
No cabin hide the spirit that hath sped
Into those far off regions of the dead,
Whence comes the Hope of Immortality.

MARGUERITE POLLARD.

A GREAT SPIRIT

WHEN I put those three words at the top—*A Great Spirit*—I am thinking, not so much of John Cowper Powys himself, as of this new book of his, *The Pleasures of Literature* (Cassell, 12s. 6d.); a book that shows, to borrow one of the expressions in it, "a superhuman possession by the spirit." How unusual is the spirit animating this book can be shown both by quotation and by exposition. To begin with quotation: in an essay on Homer's *Odyssey*, Mr. Powys has:

> Man is the valuing animal. His fellow-creatures driven by instinct and necessity suffer and perish, even as he does; but one thing they lack—the glory and the pain of choice.
>
> All men, even the most miserable, even those most driven by necessity, have innumerable occasions for making decisions. Such moments are often our most unhappy ones, for what we call "freewill," whether an illusion or not from the point of view of rational logic, is man's supreme curse as well as his unique glory. It exists, for all our logic, as an intuitively-felt fact. And it applies not only to our outward actions but to our thoughts, to our emotional and sensuous responses to the life-stream around us. And this power of choice belongs to the deepest abysses of the soul. It is wilful, it is arbitrary, it is often insane; it is the assertion of the unique self within us against all reason, against all order, decency, duty, interest. The self within us, down in its unfathomable profundities, is the accomplice not only of life but of death, not only of creation but of destruction.
>
> A man, as Dostoievsky explains in that story of his to which Hamlet might have given the title "the fellow i' the cellarage," frequently wills his own hurt, his own injury, his own debasement, his own destruction.
>
> But he can also will—even in the midst of the malice of circumstance—a certain *selection of things* upon which to concentrate, such as, set up in opposition to the venom of causality, can give a grace, a dignity, a significance to the drift of his days.

The supremely valuable contribution of Mr. Powys, it might be thought, to the teaching of our time, while others are seeking to drive men into mass movements of all kinds, beginning with the mass movement (so it may be called) of following mere outworn convention and tradition (last century's grinning skull), is the emphasis laid, as there, on the right of a man to "the assertion of his unique self," not as against any doctrine of *Entsagen*, but as including it and passing beyond it.

The best and by far the bravest essay in the book is on Shakespeare. To show how revealing it is, I must begin with a quotation; this one:

> The vast shelves of books upon Shakespeare in our own tongue are, as I have presumed to hint, at their weakest in this most important aspect of the subject. His characters have been discussed to a point of weariness, his allusions to every mortal

subject have been catalogued, his sources collated, his dramatic art explained, and here and there—though much more rarely—a poet like Coleridge, or a critic like Hazlitt, has thrown light upon the technical secrets of his actual poetry; but the mere fact that such a simple expression as "the philosophy of Shakespeare" is calculated to give a scholarly student no slight shock is a proof of what little headway has been made in the essence of the matter.

In the few cases where such an attempt has been undertaken one is conscious of a moral idealization that leaves, if I may coin such an expression, a hollow sweetness in the mouth, and not only this, but an uncomfortable feeling that the man has been made so completely "everything," that, like the Deity in a logical pantheistic system, he hovers on the brink of the antinomic "nothing."

What I would like to suggest in this place is that it is just as possible to be a disciple of the philosophy of Shakespeare as to be a disciple of the philosophy of St. Paul, or Dante, or Rabelais, or Goethe; nor do I think that the fact of his being a playwright need throw any insurmountable difficulties in the way.

Surely, a reader of the plays endowed with any degree of intelligence can catch through the seductive clamour of opposing voices a clear drift of the author's personal reaction to life, a drift revealed not only by the thousand floating straws and bubbles and foam-wisps and revolving eddies upon the surface of the tide, but by the unrevealing nature of the "murmurs and scents" of the unknown sea towards which it is moving.

Another quotation, and the matter will be clearer, and, there being nothing that could benefit mankind in anything like the degree of the benefit to it of a multiplication of the existing number of disciples of Shakespeare, it is a matter emphatically to make clear:—

Returning to what a person would aim at who decided to become a disciple of Shakespeare rather than of Dante, say, or of Milton, or of Goethe, or of Dostoievsky.

In the first place, such an one would be what you might call a fluid and malleable individualist; that is to say, an individualist whose egoism is tempered by such simple virtues as generosity, mercy, loyalty, courage, and gentleness.

In the second place, such an one would retain an unwavering agnosticism towards all the great ultimate questions, such as whether there is life after death, whether the universe has a purpose, whether such a purpose takes cognizance of man, whether evil is a positive or a negative power, whether matter is eternal, whether God is a Person who thinks and loves or a blind creative Force.

In the third place, such an one would hold the view that the usage and customs and traditions and conventions of ordinary

humanity contain more wisdom than the most logical systems of the profoundest philosophers.

In the fourth place, such an one would avoid every kind of extravagant, violent, Quixotic, fanatic virtue; remaining infinitely indulgent both to his own lapses, weaknesses, and indolences, and to the lapses, weaknesses, and indolences of others.

The Pleasures of Literature, a large book of not far short of seven hundred pages, also contains essays on the Bible as literature, Dostoievsky, Rabelais, Dickens, Greek Tragedy, St. Paul, Dante, Montaigne, Wordsworth, Milton, Arnold, Whitman, Cervantes, Nietzsche, Goethe, Hardy and Proust.

This play, *On The Frontier* (Faber and Faber, 6s.) was announced as to be produced, and one presumes was produced, at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge, on November 14, 1938. I do not know with what success. The characters, apart from two Steel Trust magnates, and the secretary and butler of one of them, and a Storm-trooper, who in the end shoots one of the magnates, are a thinly disguised German family, and another, this one French, plus *The Leader* (i.e. The Dictator, Herr A. H.). A novelty is that the two families are not brought separately onto the stage, but together, each keeping to its own half of the boards. A *liaison* between them is an affection that springs up, each for the other, in the persons of Eric of the German family and Anna of the French. They die, as does *The Leader* also (shot; by none regretted; in his time magnate-ridiculed behind his back): they die, I say, but their souls meet afterwards, and this one is to understand as symbolical of a one-day-to-come reconciliation of the German people and the French. May it be so! Parts of the play do not hang together any too well. *The Leader* is a veritable cock-sky. The suspicion creeps over one that the play might have been written by two clever jackanapes. Or by one even.

J. A. CHAPMAN.

One of the chief interests of the Rev. Dr. A. L. Drummond, Ph.D. (Edin.), S.T.M. (Hartford, U.S.A.), who contributed recently a Scotch view of American poetry, is the promotion of a better understanding between Britain and the United States.

In 1928–30 he had the opportunity of studying the American scene—in New England particularly. The history, literature and architecture of the United States appealed to him, and he enjoyed many opportunities of meeting cultured people. In the summer of 1931 he acted as visiting Professor in Church Architecture and Worship at the University of Chicago. He is now Minister of the Church of Scotland at Alva. His thought, sociologically, was much influenced by the late Professor Patrick Geddes. He has published *The Church Architecture of Protestantism* and *Edward Irving and His Circle* (Jas. Clarke).

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXXVII

To one who has seen a picture of Mrs. Maud Lamb Wingate's garden, which is of her own making, it is not surprising to find in her poems transcriptions of the pleasure to be had therein. There are also in this first book of some ninety pages (Putnam's) sonnets bespeaking a fine appreciation of the privileges and perils of life. Mrs. Wingate is a sculptor and in addition a composer of music, and has been a contributor to THE POETRY REVIEW and *Poetry of To-day*.

The beautiful gardens of "Far View" at Twilight Park, in the Catskill Mountains, draw General and Mrs. Wingate in the leisure of their summer hours. "Day And Night" carries us through this charming place:

Now the day leans against the sky,
Seeming to wait the bird's last cry,
While hills and valleys lie in deep
Shadows, and spruce and hemlock sleep.
No wind to stir the muted bough,
For day has passed through dusk and now
The night is come. White stars in space
Look down on this enchanted place,
Where in the dark and quiet wood
The trees stand in grave solitude.
As yet I cannot believe, but wait
In silence, inarticulate,
The miracle of day and night,
The metamorphosis of light.

The contemplation of the everlasting effort and the Everlasting Mercy find their way in the following sonnet, "This Thing Defeat":

Here is defeat which I have met and bear;
I shall relinquish all futility,
And let the scars which I lament and wear
Be but a challenge to futurity.
I shall contrive to be as the brave man
Who meets his fate unshaken, in the hour
Of pain nursing no wound. Smiling he can
Face death, nor bow to an all-crushing power.
He wins a victory who seeks the light.
A fitful glimmer wavers in the dark
And fails; there is no sure path to the right.
The greatest leader only strikes a spark.
Often in battle the soldier must retreat;
Truth may retire but never meet defeat.

And Mrs. Wingate has captured a ghost in the following:

I thrust aside the creaking gate
Alone. Here love once walked with me.

The silent house stands sullen, grim;
No latch-string out to welcome me.
Across the sagging rotted tread
There in the dark mute room I come,
To find the ghosts of love still there,
Shadowy wraiths that made it home.

Spears Into Life, Dorothy Quick's third book of poetry, comes to us from G. P. Putnam's & Sons, and at the same time we have word of Miss Quick's first novel, appearing simultaneously, *Strange Awakening*. She writes of being very excited, having two books out at once and continues: "I just can't help writing poetry. I feel poetry is something that has to be spontaneous and with me is very likely to be started by lovely music or any beautiful expression. When once I have the first draft, I start to work until the poem is really finished, and although I work a great deal in prose, poetry will always be my first love. . . . So often someone else's lines have helped me over the hard places, that my one hope is some of mine may do the same thing for someone else."

Dorothy Quick has received enough approbation from the discriminating to have little fear in presenting a book. Her seemingly artless and unpremeditated quality is commented on,—much spontaneity and a display of a wide range of feeling.

A New Yorker by birth and frequently a traveller, no end of promising material passes before her ready eyes. With a temperature few degrees above zero, let us turn to a charming lyric on Spring, entitled "Brief Epitome":

How shall we add the emerald sum of Spring:
The trailing velvet of a cygnet's wing,
The ever changing nuance of the grass,
The cleave of nesting swallows as they pass,
The falling clouds of apple blossoms' snow,
The freshet breezes sighing as they blow,
The golden chalice of the daffodil,
The opal haze upon the farthest hill,
The new awareness of everything—
That is the brief epitome of Spring.

Miss Quick is not slow in finding a right title: "Chaliced":

I held love a chaliced thing—
The shining plume of a bluebird's wing,

The steady glow of an emerald's fire,
The ultimate of all desire,

I held it sacred and did not know
That the cup could spill, that love could go.

We may call " Emergent " a love lyric :

Out of the boundless realm of sky
A martin flashes, wheeling high.
Out of the endless depths of sea
A wave rolls on eternally
While from the cumbent womb of earth
New centuries are given birth.

Out of my soul from ages past
Courage for life has come at last.
Out of my mind new thoughts arise
And try to reach toward the skies.
While from my heart the urgent need
Of you is born in word and deed.

We are not surprised to find that many of Miss Quick's poems have been set to music.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

A Kansas Contributor to the Editor.

I must tell you with what real delight I read my first issue of The Poetry Review. I was delighted both with the variety and quality of material concerning poetry, and with the—to me—essential quality of world atmosphere. I have always criticized, both as a student and as a teacher, the narrowness which kept English classroom literature from more robust appreciation because kept down to some few great names. How I did read and re-read the poems " Upon the Small Chaldee Column from Paphos," and the Spitzenbergen poem, " In Petunia Bay " ! I have been both places now. If I have any adverse comment it is that the places, at least, where the various contributors live, might always be appended as in this Greek poem. I have thought of the world-aspect of poetry all of my life and rejoiced with a real rejoicing when Van Doren gave us his *Anthology of World Poetry*. To fight war and disruption and greed and lust with poetry—that is my idea of re-claiming and civilizing men.

My interest in poetry and its power to reconstruct errors of civilization is boundless. When September opens I shall again broadcast two fifteen-minute periods each week on the subject, giving running comment on various phases of the subject and reading the best of the local output.

How enticing your poetry pilgrimages sound! I can go with you in spirit only since an invalid husband and a most demanding post—teaching adults in a night school—neither permit me the time nor bring me the money to finance such journeys. So I shall only dream of going. Our night school here is not for illiterates. In our city of 120,000 we have but fifty illiterates. My group in creative writing numbers two doctors, fifteen B.A.'s and three Master's degrees. I

have felt rather like a shipwrecked sailor in the South Seas with his proverbial straw working here in America against the moronic trends of intellectuality in verse run wild ; of cheap publicity for writers who want to sell froth for wine—and who do ; and most especially the malignant trend of utter futility of existence. To be foundationed by such a periodical as THE POETRY REVIEW is like manna.

Wichita, Kansas. KONIGUNDE DUNCAN,

Excerpt from the "Journal" of RENE INGHAM BEARD, of Maryland, for some time in 1936, ON READING DANTE'S PARADISO :

During the past week I began again on Dante's " Paradiso." Beginning last April to read a canto a week I somehow stopped in August, beause of mental distress. There seemed so many conflicting problems at home here that the very beauty of Dante caused me added pain. Paradoxical it is but true ; beauty makes me suffer. The longing to be good and true ; to find myself so humanly bad.

This past week I read eight cantos and finished this week. A veritable Bible of delight, philosophy and imagination is this great work of Dante. It is difficult to express my deep appreciation of it.

The form and scope of this great poem is magnificently scaled. Often the loveliness of the great thought invoked caused me to stop reading. There are so few with whom I can exchange the deep ponderings of my heart. I have trained René, my daughter, and encouraged her to procure a classical education, in order that we might, as time passes along, grow spiritually and mentally closer and closer together. There is something about great reading, great paintings, the great and best of all things, that inspires one to feel and think deeply and usually spiritually. " Paradiso," does just this for me. Aristotle did likewise for me when I first read him at age fourteen. Suffering sharpens the wit. (In this sense I use " wit " to mean : power to think and know deeply—not speak flippantly.) Suffering increases loneliness—the loneliness of " I walk alone with God," and again " Only God and I know what is in my heart." I know this intense loneliness. I long to be understood. Hence I am lonely.

Thus this week, I have longed to write Weston Ramsey, my great poet friend. An intellectual friendship with a professor often becomes stuffy—for he becomes too formal and too much of a pedant on his particular subject. The friendship with a classicist (e.g. W.R.) never descends to boredom. To understand all the references in Dante to beauty, music, time and space, draws upon all the arts and sciences, upon all the figures of speech, upon all the powers of imagination. To read Dante intelligently, one must know astronomy and astrology, be a *devout* student of the Bible, and Biblical authorities : Polycarp, Anselm, Aquinas, Jerome, Josephus and all others ; one must know great artists, geographers, thinkers and travellers. In short and in fine, one must know something of everything. Such an one is Weston Ramsey. I can talk to him.

At times I attempted to fathom the lonely beauty. I asked myself, "Is the infinite lonely? Is the air on the mountains so rare that few can bear to breathe it?" (e.g. hear the WORD). Then it was as if a great organ pealed forth. The music soft at first, as Dante begins his ascent; the laboured passing over place names and personalities; the music crescendo as Dante approaches Peter on Faith, James on Hope and John on Love. Adam, the first man, speaks; Christ and Mary, the highest, beckon; the music resounds into an anguish of chords, stops, powers! Dante sees light around which the nine heavens move. The music of the organ increases still louder! Dante reaches heaven, Empyrean! He is at peace! And as Dante finds the answer to the eternal longing and quest for the Holy Grail, for perfection within his own heart and its relationship to God, it is as if he passed to the ceasing of exquisite music. The organ is still, Dante is, at once, at the centre, the ultimate longing, the epitome of peace, the essence of perfection—Dante is with God. In the oneness of wish and will, Dante has found God, who is Love.

I liked the first and last of the "Paradiso" poem better than the middle books which often confounded me with the details of chronological events and Italian history. It is symbolical that Dante is tested in the 8th heaven in the articles of his Faith, Hope and Love before he can advance to Empyrean or Heaven supreme. Logically Dante has Adam the first man speak to array his worth against the Christ or redeemer of sinful man, Rev. 21, verses 1, 27, and Rev. 22: verses 1, 5, 11, 12, 13, 20, were a great help to me as I read Dante.

Canto XXVI, 64–67 powerful and beautiful words! So many examples of unusual words and ideas are in "Paradiso" that one could not cite all. Viz: "unwinter Hosanna" to sing Hosanna in the eternal Spring of heaven. Canto XXVII: 106 and 112–114, "Life" and "Love" and "Circle" are beautiful words. Canto XXVII: 109: This heaven hath no other where.

The use of "where" is not to be surpassed in fitness. Canto XXVII 115–120: Profound passage and Dante abounds in such immense distinctions. Canto XXVIII: Nine concentric circles on one point, farthest, nearest; nearest, farthest is a marvellous thought. One could write a book on this one idea alone. There are nine digits to express all numbers and nine heavens express all grades of progression from inconstancy and earthly love to Saturn or 7th earthly heaven, which with *temperance* and *contemplation* passes one to stellar heaven, primum mobile and thence to God, perfection. In short the nine circles or heavens on the one point of Light, God! Were the ancient theologicians right when they argued that so many angels could dance on the point of a needle? I now know that nine heavens can dance on one point of Light.

Dante finds the answer of the Triune Deity—the Trinity in God the Son and reflected Humanity.

This perfect poem is unfathomable, I leave here just a few thoughts

to show how deeply it impressed me. I could never hope to explain it, not understand it until I, too, had passed through the seven earthly heavens and on through my natal star and primum mobile to—God, the Empyrean, Supreme Heaven. Thus I quote Bonaventura:

"Supremely may be said absolutely or with respect to such an one None partaketh (understandeth) God supremely in the absolute sense, but supremely with respect to himself."

A Critical Letter.

(*To the Editor*, The Poetry Review.)

Dear Sir,—I liked J. A. Chapman's article in the November-December number. May I call attention to a point which he and nearly everyone has overlooked, namely, that the sub-title of *The Golden Treasury* is *The Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language*, and that therefore it has never been representative of the *whole* range of English poetry (narrative, drama, etc. being excluded). But this hardly affects what J. A. Chapman has to say.

I also found the two main articles of the present number interesting. But I found MacCallum Smith unconvincing in his generalizations (p. 17 etc.) on English and Scottish poetry. While admiring the Scottish literary revival and Mr. Smith's work on Scottish poets, I fail to see what evidence he brings forward that would persuade anyone to feel that in England poetry will in a few years have "declined rapidly." He quotes Day Lewis at his worst, MacNeice not at all, and remarks "Of the new English school I have only come across two satisfying writers, Prokosch and Whistler." That Prokosch (an American actually), is neither new nor very good is shown in a review in the new *Kenyon Review*, where his vague romanticisms are exposed. And as for Whistler, he does not even occur in such anthologies as *The Faber Book of Modern Verse* and *The Years Poetry* (as far as I remember) but they may not be sufficiently catholic and representative for the omission of The Poetry Review's distinguished contributor and King's Gold Medallist to be significant. Surely, however, more names would have to be brought in to make such a sweeping generalization even faintly convincing? But I have said enough—not too much or too bluntly, I hope!

It would be a good idea if some contributors suggested at the end of a year what things have particularly interested them during the year, for instance, such phrases as "towers crumbling into fame" in Edward Lowbury's *May the Thirteenth* (early in the year) deserve comment.

Yours etc., Terence Heywood.

Mr. Theodore Nicholl will read from his new volume, *Wild Geese* (Duckworth) on March 8th, 5.15 p.m., at The Poetry Society's Library. This series of open meetings will be concluded on the following Wednesday by a special address by Dr. Max Gellinger, vice-president of the Swiss Authors' League.

IT IS PEACE?

THERE are times, such as the present, when topical poetry is charged with permanent and not ephemeral values. A number of writers associated with The Poetry Society have faced the thoughts of peace and war, and poems on these subjects are in their recently published books. Alice Hunt Bartlett, the well-known authority on American poetry and associate editor of THE POETRY REVIEW, is herself no mean poet, as her new book of poems *Visitation* (Heath Cranton 3s. 6d.) once more proves. In it are included that fine poem "Sappho," which originally appeared in THE POETRY REVIEW, and several sonnets written during her recent visit to Italy. This one was written at Gibraltar:

> The Seven Seas in majesty and power
> Unite our world, her near and far-off shores
> In clasp of liberal friendship—when War's
> Destructive hand is raised and the bright flower
> Of manhood merciless guns devour,
> In spite of moral suasion and the laws
> Of advocates of Peace, War's Senators
> Destroy Earth's sun-rich and her moon-clad hour.
>
> Descend, Great God Jehovah, from your height,
> Command to end this killing men by men,
> From all earth's acres lifts a prayer this night
> To drop the sword for the much Godlier pen—
> Then, and but then, our world the seas unite
> Will swing through Time to regions past our ken.

The sonnet is a favourite and well-handled form of Mrs. Hunt Bartlett's, and even the stanzas of "Sappho" and the touching elegy "For Ethel" make sonnet sequences.

Mr. Cecil Moore has published several books of verse between 1935 and 1939, including *The Lamp of Truth*, *The Lament of Beauty*, *The League of Immortality* (Daniel), *The Things Eternal*, and *Poems of Life, Love and Nature* (Blackwell). He is a preacher and philosopher in verse, pressing the need of beauty, truth and goodness. The latest volume, *The League of Immortality*, with its sub-title of "A humble contribution to World Peace" is an urgent appeal to man to foster the thoughts and actions of peace. The strengthening influence of a great persuasive poem like "The Testament of Beauty" can be felt and appreciated in it, though it is a pity to let the mannerisms of Bridges, master craftsman though he was, to intrude in this work.

"Peace with Honour" is also approached with sincerity and conviction by Christian MacIntyre in *Dawn* (Celandine Press 3s. 6d.). Her diction takes on the dignity of its theme here, though others of her poems are sometimes marred by inexpert twisting of syntax:

" Peace with Honour ! " say it reverently,
For one man dared to stake his soul on that ;
Dared to believe and act that we might live ;—
Shall we then pillory him ?—Well, for what ?

Come peace, come war—whate'er the final issue.
It shall not then rest on one mere man,
But upon each individual's thinking—
See to it then—your thinking is your own !

Sharp-lined imagery and delicate phrases give an individual stamp to the short lyrics in *The Human Patina* (Hollycrofters Press) by Grover I. Jacoby, Jr. His " Ode to France " is a significant poem concerned with that uppermost theme to-day ; and it has this refrain :

Now airplanes steep the air in sound,
Sawing the dark-grained thought in two
With this :
The very sky must be a battleground
For you,
Chère lumière *in Europas Finsternis.*

David Fridlander in *Of Earth and the Spirit* (Blackwell 5s.) and E. B. W. Chappelow in *West Country Poems* (Channing Press, 2s. 6d.) are non-topical in that they are concerned, the one with fundamental and abstract values, and the other with his loved West Country. Mr. Fridlander, an artist himself, must be addressing another artist when he says :

There is another art than this of thine,
That smacks not so aggressively of place and time
That men may instant know where it was born. . . .

for his own poems show him to be listening to inner promptings rather than outer sounds. They are delicate, firmly written lyrics, sensitive to beauty in every form and reaching a deep understanding in " The Body on the Cross," from which this stanza is quoted :

And this the body, lifeless, rigid grown,
Wherein the work of man is open shown :
The degradation of his devious ways,
The bitter, tear-stained current of his days :
That body in whose carriage spoke the grace,
The living truth, that life might not displace
From its immortal way of suffering,
That life's essential destiny should bring
Home to the heart of man, one way to show
Where his predestined wanderings must go,
Beyond all darkness of the gods and men,
Unto the source of all true light again.

Mr. Chappelow not only describes his countryside and towns like Bath, with its unmatchable green and their grey architectures, but, aided by his scholarship, re-peoples his cities and raises Lyonesse from the deep. His happy handling of legend and language give the book a special charm. This is a sonnet on *The Mayflower:*

High-pooped, full-sailed, and bending to the wind,
Breasting each motion of the heaving sea,
The turf-capped cliffs of England left behind,
England, unwary wielder of tyranny,
Named of that blossom our highways hedged with are,
Proudly for all the heart-break in her hold,
A gallant ship she clove the harbour-bar,
Spars, canvas, rigging, touched with morning gold.
Matter for mockery then, she is known to-day
For symbol of a larger, lordlier love,
A franker freedom, being America
And all the multitudinous good thereof,
The western waters thick with argosies,
The fame, the fruitful fields, the teeming cities.

The *Poems* of Calvin S. Lambert (*Poetry of To-day*) are of an unpretentious character. He writes on a remarkable variety of subjects, but the poems on his own islands, the West Indies, make most appeal:

Far from the grip of Winter's frost,
'Neath glittering tropic stars:
Thou lovely portion of the isles—
La Trinidad! La Trinidad!
Here Cristobal in sacred vow
Thus named thee Holy Trinity.
Thy everlasting mounts inspire
The native-born, the traveller,
And thy sweet breeze at early dawn
Shields tropic heat-waves from our seas.
At break of day, what lovelier
Than thy green fields and rippling streams,
The beauty of thy chirping birds
With hues of blue and red and green!
No spot on earth with thee compares,
La Trinidad! La Trinidad!

Though Christmas is past its messages of "Peace and Goodwill" are intended for the whole year. *Christmas Pie* by Constance F. Piers, is a small collection of Christmas card verses, some brought neatly up to the date of the telephone and the radio. *Christmas Voices* by A. H. Mumford, B.D. (Stockwell, 1s. 6d.) contains some simple lyrics and legend-ballads. The Christmas message dominates a new book

of religious verse by Mary Winter Were, *Peace Music* (Bagster, 9d.). There is always charm in her poems, nor is she afraid to bring her message into modern environments, or to look at old age in "Growing Old" with the same eyes as Browning:

The soul is growing younger as the body's growing old,
With earthly pleasures passing, life's mysteries unfold;
If April has her primrose, October has his gold.

The ivory of old lace veils bridal brow and breast,
The friendly glow of old wine gives welcome to the guest,
Old trees have spreading branches in which young birds may nest.

Old faded eyes love-hallowed are pools of quiet peace,
Revealing in their shadows the heart's serenities;
And beautiful are old hands lying at leisured ease.

So may we grow in beauty and trail a graciousness
Across the deepening twilight until our lips caress
The feet of the approaching Dawn with joy that none may guess.

E. D. Bangay.

Biographies and Anthologies.

Modes in literature are an interesting study: Hölderlin is quite the fashion at the moment, and it is for this reason perhaps that we find a book of 175 pages devoted to this poet (*Hölderlin*, by Ronald Peacock. Methuen, 10s. 6d.), following on *Hölderlin's Madness* reviewed in our last September issue. Whether there is sufficient intrinsic interest in Hölderlin to warrant such a devotion of space and effort, is another matter. That he was a poet and a poet of some importance in German literature is not to be denied. And we have no hesitation in commending this book on one point, that it does deal with the poet's sanity, and not with the madness which has been so triumphantly exploited by the exponents of Surrealism. This is indeed a scholarly, orderly treatise by a man who knows and loves Hölderlin, and it is doubtful if it leaves very much for anyone else to say. The chapter on Diotima and the Prophetic Poetry are most admirable, as indeed is the whole tracing out of classical influences in Hölderlin. The book is enjoyable, more readable than many novels, and the extracts from the poet are most happily chosen. We cannot praise too highly the author's expedient of giving *prose* translations of the latter in a separate section at the end of the book. The bibliography is adequate; failure to provide an index, a serious omission in a work of this type.

John Cornford—A Memoir, edited by Pat Sloan (Cape, 7s. 6d.), reveals the characteristic restlessness of an intransigent type of the younger generation. This son of a Cambridge professor, who was killed in

Spain when twenty-one, did not long maintain the placidity and good temper of his babyhood. He soon began to kick against authority. At Stowe, before he was fifteen, " he had begun to be critical of the school as, indeed, of everything else. He was already anti-militarist and atheist," and had become sympathetic to socialism. He had already begun " to break away from the influence of his parents and overthrow many of the conceptions which accompanied his upbringing in a university intellectual family: also, he had begun to feel, as he put it, " degraded' by his financial dependence on his parents. . . . It was an early stage in the making of a genuine revolutionary." At the same age, too, he " became predominantly interested in poetry ; thenceforth poetry became his main medium of development. He attacked the subject with his usual voracity, and in a few months was extremely well read and had evolved his own theories on the subject. In brief, these theories amounted to a demand for *honesty*, *accuracy*, and *significance* in poetry. Reacting strongly against the ' escapism ' of the Georgian poets, he loathed all false lyricism and romanticism. ' Beauty ' was a word unmentionable in his presence, and he had a peculiarly strong dislike of all poetic diction. . . . The later and more obscure works of Robert Graves were at first his favourite poetry ; then T. S. Eliot and W. H. Auden. He wrote critical essays on Graves and Eliot, and his essay on Eliot's ' Waste Land ' (which poem he held to deal with the plight of the post-war generation in Europe) leads me to think that it was partly through the search for a sociological or historical explanation for the nature of a poem that he came to consider contemporary society, and so politics, and so Communism." His brother adds : " John's poems (for he wrote them, as well as read) are many of them records of a growing feeling of restlessness and dissatisfaction with the limitations of his life, written in an introspective, tortuous style strongly influenced by Eliot and Auden, and contrasting markedly with the beautiful directness of his later work." Some of these poems are given—condensed statements of imaginary experiences in which, when he is not glorifying hatred, he is writing about walking with " lips bilberry-stained." A year or so later he had adopted a " superior, above-politic standpoint." To him, " the whole country appears to have gone militarist, or, rather, the whole press, including ' that Tory rag, *The Times*,' " and " henceforth, his medium of development was Marxism," and he had decided on " the need for a revolution with fighting." But the best letters of this period, from the age of fourteen onwards, are those to his mother, discussing poetry and criticizing his mother's poems as well as his own efforts—by far the most valuable part of this " memoir " and distinctly deserving of being considered at greater length. At Cambridge, as an adolescent, he was largely identified with advanced communistic propaganda, developing in a fashion characteristic of his type of youth. We are told by a friend " he could talk in a Rabelaisian strain about scarecrow prostitutes he had seen in the East End, and

his favourite terms were ' bloody ' and ' bastard.' I met him on his way back to the Tripos hall for his last afternoon there in the First Part: he and a Canadian friend had been priming themselves with brandy during lunch, and were marching along singing ribald snatches, clearly fancying themselves as a pair of Wild West tough men. That evening he called on me with three pints of beer inside him and stamped up and down the room shouting, like the ma in the *Beggar's Opera*, ' I want women ! ' . . . He went off to a committee, where, I heard, he was just sober enough to transact business, with a terrifying stream of violent language. These fits of animal spirits were one side of his physical energy. He did everything forcefully. His idea of a game of ping-pong was to bawl and bang his paddle on the table to upset his opponent, and serve when the latter wasn't looking. He enjoyed immensely Peter Lorre's film about the anarchist gang in London, on account of the salvo of gunshots with which it ended. Any conception of fighting as an ' art ' was foreign to him ; he knew little of boxing science or rules, he told me, but he could *hurt* an enemy, and would as soon kick him as anything else. He would certainly have been formidable, for his temper and powerful, ungraceful build, in any hand-to-hand fight."

All in a Maze, by Daniel George, with a preface by Rose Macaulay (Collins, 6s.) takes its title from some seventeenth-century lines :

> "Now that the world is *all in a maze*,
> Armies marching, towns in a blaze,
> What should an honest fellow do ? "

It is a collection of passages in prose or in verse, ranging from Aeschylus to the recent crisis, in praise or in condemnation of war. The editor has brought scholarship and wide reading to the task, but his book can hardly be recommended for the bedside.

On the other hand, those wishing to add to their bedside shelf can be advised to look at *Straw in the Hair* (The Bodley Head, 7s. 6d.), by Denys Kilham Roberts, who is well known both as Secretary to the Society of Authors and as the editor of the annual volumes called *The Year's Poetry*. He terms his book an anthology of nonsensical and surrealist verse. There are sundry old rhymes and songs, some from the Elizabethans, many of them anonymous. Many pages are given to Lear and Lewis Carroll, while C. S. Calverley (though two of his contributions are excellent parodies and not nonsense), de la Mare, Squire, Quiller-Couch, Chesterton, Alfred Douglas, Belloc, E. C. Bentley, and two of the Sitwells are also " among those present," as the Society-journals say. The general scheme is partly like that on which Mr. Auden's *Oxford Book of Light Verse* has been compiled, but there is more fun in *Straw in the Hair*, and Mr. Victor Reinganum's hilarious, nightmare illustrations add to the joyous feast of Unreason.

It must surely have been of malice aforethought that Mr. Kilham

Roberts included a few specimens of surrealist verse, for they are funny only in the way in which a drunken man may sometimes unintentionally amuse us. It would be unkind to name the authors. They may grow out of it. Sir John Squire's poem, with its refrain "I'm not so thunk ans you drink I am," is much funnier, and also a witty parody of the surrealist theory

Mr. W. H. Auden has been entrusted with the compilation of *The Oxford Book of Light Verse* (Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford, 8s. 6d.), and it is a much more competent performance than the last venture in this series, *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*. By his title Mr. Auden means popular verse, easily understood and not deeply emotional. A year or two ago, Mr. Auden ("with him," as lawyers say, Mr. John Garratt), issued a somewhat novel anthology, *The Poet's Tongue*. It was an impudent macédoine, in which immortal poems were mixed with nonsense-verse and doggerel rhymes, but the experiment succeeded. He shows a similar catholicity in this book. Chaucer, Skelton, Ben Jonson, Dryden, Pope, Goldsmith, Burns, Byron, Lear, Kipling, Belloc, are jostled by street-ballads, limericks, and vulgar popular songs, such as "He was her man and he done her wrong," by unknown authors. Mr. Auden's industry has been prodigious, and his book should have a good market. It is true that, as more than one reviewer has hinted, readers will frequently wonder why on earth this or that was thought worthy of inclusion. The explanation may possibly be that among the many gifts, among them being exuberant boyish high spirits, which the fairies brought to Mr. Auden's cradle, a saving sense of humour may not have been included. I have observed the like in two or three other young poets of political inclination to the left.

Much has been written, in prose and verse, about the Spanish Civil War. Most of it, for some reason or other, has come from what are called Left-Wing writers, Communists and the like. In the September 1937 number of this REVIEW (p. 414) will be found a notice of Mr. Auden's poem on this subject, a prosaic and commonplace production containing of poetry only what analysts, after adding up the percentages of the recognizable ingredients to the full 100, call "a trace," but enlivened by involuntarily amusing passages. Mr. Roy Campbell, well known as a vigorous poet and satirist, is what the Scotch call "a bonny fechter" in the opposite camp. His *Flowering Rifle, a poem from the battlefields of Spain* (Longmans, 6s.), is a savage attack on what he regards as the components of Republican Spain, Bolsheviks, anarchists, degenerates, intellectual perverts, *et hoc genus omne*. Of course, the Jews are included. Lenin is again and again (erroneously, I understand), pilloried as a Jew. On the other hand, Mr. Campbell is so enthusiastic an admirer of all things Spanish that he even has a

good word for the Inquisition. As compared with some who have written in support of the other side, he has the advantage or disadvantage of having earned his livelihood in Spain for some time before the troubles began. He had even appeared in the bull-ring. He asserts that the supporters of Republican Spain began operations by slaughtering more unarmed victims than the whole war has yet slain. Rabid partisan though he be, it must be remembered that he was on the spot when these things began. He escaped (in a corpse-cart) southwards, but soon returned to fight. He affirms that the early insurgents were armed entirely with French and Russian equipment which they captured.

The poem would have been better if he could have greatly compressed it. It is longer than the *Inferno*. But he is too torrential to compress. Often he reminds one of the bull charging in thundering assault. But a line or two later he is the picador, pricking and goading his enemies with skilful thrusts. His style changes again and again from free and easy colloquialism to stately eloquence. Long though the poem is, one is tempted to read on and on, in the sure and certain hope that at any moment one will encounter a few lines of blistering satire or arresting poetry.

Three recent biographies offer singular contrasts. There is that of George MacDonald, *Gathered Grace*, by Elizabeth Yates (Heffer, 5s.); that of *John Gay*, by Phoebe Fenwick Gaye (Collins, 18s.); and one of himself by C. Wrey Gardiner, *The Colonies of Heaven*, The Autobiography of a Poet (Channing Press, 7s. 6d.). George MacDonald's life is skilfully sketched by Elizabeth Yates in the first twenty-five pages of her book. The rest is filled by an excellent selection of his poetry. His life-history, necessarily much condensed, is yet illustrated by passages from his letters in such a way as to show the strong affections and unwavering integrity of the man, and the poems endorse his faith and vision. Perhaps it is hardly strange that while his novels, written for propaganda even more than profit, are now more on the bookshelves than in the hands of his readers, *The Back of the North Wind* and many of his poems, used as hymns, are very present possessions. John Gay's private life has been little studied or made known, but the author of this biography has written a very comprehensive book on him. His close friendship with Pope, Swift, the Duchess of Queensberry, and others, was largely due, one realizes, to his own frank and friendly nature as well as his genius. The book is scholarly in its scope and yet almost racily written, for one comes across an echo of an unserious history when an early failure of Gay as apprentice to a silk-mercer is described as "a Good Thing for all concerned." The title itself of *The Colonies of Heaven* is an attractive one, and to anyone who knows or discovers the rest of the quotation from Sir Thomas Browne:

"The Colonies of Heaven must be drawn from Earth."

" A Miracle of thirty years which to relate were not a history but a piece of poetry."

it became highly significant. Mr. Gardiner has done just that: he has taken the events of his life—one which seems materially very conducive to anyone wishing to study and write, yet with the lights and shades highly intensified by the sensitiveness of the artistic temperament—and filled it with clearly remembered details and all the analytical thoughts that underlie creative work.

An amusing account is given in Miss Finch's biography of Wilfred Scawen Blunt (Cape) of the gregarious attempt of eight contemporary poets to honour Blunt as a poet by giving him a public dinner in 1914. " Blunt did not feel the honour altogether undeserved, he believed his verse to be good—' or,' he said, ' I should burn it, also I have always held it as certain that good poetry will sooner or later find its level and that if it remains unknown it is because it deserves obscurity.' Nevertheless, he was surprised, since he had published no verse for twelve years—and he was touched. He suggested that the eight poets who were to be present at the dinner should come to Newbuildings instead of his going to them, and the date was set for January 18th. As the day approached Blunt was filled with trepidation, allayed only partially by Lord Osborne Beauclerk's coming to support him through the ordeal; and on the arrival of the poets, owing in part to Blunt's shyness and in part to his bewilderment over the whole affair, it required some time to break the ice. A peacock, by Yeats's request, was served up in full plumage on the table.

Men (say, fifty or seventy years ago) began to work hard at the Short Story, after Richardson and Fielding, Thackeray and Dickens and George Eliot, and Tolstoi, and the other Russians had shown what could be done with the full Novel. And now, on one's shelves, are the Short Stories of Guy de Maupassant, Chekhov, Kipling, Katherine Mansfield, Henry James, and so many others. That is not to say that the finest Short Story of them all might not be written to-morrow; for genius is incalculable. If it is not to say that, it is to say something; namely, that the average new Short Story, or even the better than the average, after so many " meetings," will read not unlike a dressing-up again of some figure with whose features we have all grown pretty familiar. So *New Writing. New Series. Autumn*, 1938 (The Hogarth Press, 6s.), as very largely an anthology of new Short Stories, is so " old " as to provoke the question: " How much more? How much longer? "

The poetry included in the volume is better; yet even here you must prepare for disappointment; for the first poem, a sonnet by Auden (worth giving in full, and I will give it in a minute), is not followed by anything nearly as like poetry as it is, and much of the writing is *so*

much in the public fashion of to-day, that it dates before you have time to turn over the page.

This is the sonnet, *Exiles :*

The course of man is never quite completed,
The daring and the chatter will go on ;
But, as an artist feels his power gone,
These walk the earth and know themselves defeated.

Some could not bear nor break the young, and mourn for
The wounded myths that once made nations good,
Some lost a world they never understood,
Some saw too clearly all that man was born for.

Loss is their shadow-wife, anxiety
Receives them like a grand hotel ; but where
They may regret, they must ; their life, to hear

The call of the forbidden cities, see
The stranger watch them with a happy stare,
And freedom hostile in each home and tree.

Poetry *v.* " Modernism "

(*To the Editor of* The Poetry Review)

Sir,—I have read with interest Mr. MacCallum Smith's article on " The Poetic Value of Modernism," but it has left me with some doubts and questions. At one point he seems to imply (and with this I agree) that Modernism—conscious modernism, this is—does not, or should not, exist, but is merely development and poetic progress. At another point he says modernism is an evasion, employs a fraudulent method which he does not intend to interpret ; that the modernists are afraid of emotion, etc. ; that there is no genuine poetry in England to-day. It is this last statement which I desire to question. I myself have, so far as I am aware, nothing but Scottish blood in my veins, and have therefore no axe to grind.

Throughout his article Mr. MacCallum Smith seems, though a trifle confusedly, to identify modernism in England with the Auden-Day Lewis school. Why ? He himself seems to admit that modernism, if the term must be adopted, can exist apart from conscious striving after newness and originality, apart even from expression of contemporary life ; yet he has apparently adopted the common belief, started and fostered by themselves, that this little group and its imitators are representative of modern England, her poetry. Again, why ? This group has made a " ring," such as has existed, beyond a doubt, in every literary age, such as exists in any trade. They have employed the methods of all good salesmen, man being a gullible, a suggestible creature, and have got themselves talked about, advertised. Yet they are artificial ; lacking in real, intense feeling ; their amazing dis-

coveries astonish no one but themselves—were commonplaces, indeed, in Shakespeare's time; such criticisms of life as they produce are, like all bad criticism, destructive, not constructive: they seem, in fact, not to grow beyond the undergraduate, the adolescent, stage. Even those of their critics who wish them well seem to spend much time in trying to discover some grains of gold among the dross. Yet they have got themselves adopted, apparently, as the Poets of England.

No one can deny that emotion is the driving power of life. It is the failure of the human mind to organize its emotional reactions that produces the difficulties in which it finds itself; and the individual mind is the nucleus of humanity, of civilization. How, therefore, can one who denies emotion become a poet? It seems to me that the poet who indulges in too much analysis and theory will ultimately destroy himself.

This group of people apparently go all over the world to find themselves a *milieu*. Again, it seems to me that the real poet finds his *milieu* just where he happens to be. Poetry comes to him, not he to poetry. Let not, therefore, the poetry of England stand or fall by such as these.

I said in an article in this REVIEW some time ago that I did not believe in "schools," i.e. groups of persons who band together for mutual applause, criticism, or imitation, and I have seen no reason since to change my opinion. Such interdependence is all wrong. Its abuses are self-evident. The "Emperor's New Clothes" attitude, induced by the fact that everyone is afraid utterly to condemn for fear that he has failed to see what everyone else appears to be seeing, is one of them. Each poet should stand or fall on his own merits and before impartial criticism, if such a thing could be.

Again, why should poetry, to be modern, be sociological? Was this ever an essential of poetry? There is a saying—"Oratory is heard; poetry is overheard." Let oratory, then, proceed with the social service, the socialistic propaganda. And let not the poet forget the real essentials of his art, among which is not to be despised a lucid and a logical mind. Emotional sincerity and intensity of feeling, the power to experience within oneself the fundamental passions of mankind, is, has been, and, no doubt, will ever be, the basis of poetry. The best poems come, not by evocation, but because they will not be denied utterance. The poet must also have that other, that indefinable thing, without which poetry is as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, called by some the Divine Afflatus, by some Inspiration, by some the Inner Voice.

I deny, therefore, that poetry must express the age. Poetry has no age. I deny that the use of colloquialisms makes poetry more "human." I deny that England to-day has no real poets. To find them, one has to look no further than the recent anthologies produced by Mr. John Gawsworth—*Edwardian Poetry* and *Fifty Years of Modern Verse*. To mention only a few, there are, writing to-day, such people

as Dorothy Wellesley, Anna Wickham, Humbert Wolfe, V. Sackville West, Ruth Pitter.

I am, etc.,

Edinburgh, January 14th. DOROTHY M. PAULIN.

(*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW)

SIR,—It is not with me as it is, apparently, with Mrs. Dorothy M. Paulin and so many others: it costs me nothing to acquiesce, seeing that those young men have captured the title or the term, in the use of "modernism" as connoting the Auden-Day Lewis school of poetry. It is a convenience to have a comprehensive term, generally understood and easy to remember, whereby to designate something of which half the world is all the time thinking and talking. After all, too, if much of the verse of the Auden-Day Lewis school keeps alive and survives, or even a little of it, it will be its own worth that will so keep it, and not the fortuitous strength that it now derives from its comprehensive title. It must even gradually shed its title; for no child of, say, 2039, but will wish to reserve "modernism" as the title of something of its own day. The work of the Auden-Day Lewis school, if it is then known at all, will perforce not be known as "modernism." So reflecting, I care not a straw what it is known as to-day.

What I do care for is that it should be as over-rated as it is. How, it may here be asked, can one man know how it is rated; he having access to the reviews, his own relatively small circle of acquaintance, and so forth, how can he know how the Auden-Day Lewis school's work is rated? He cannot know, of course, what is thought of it in, say, Bristol or the West Riding of Yorkshire, whither he never goes, and where he has no circle of correspondents. There may, however, have been this general indication for him—that he has been told by its happy publishers that the Auden-Day Lewis school "has a great following," while those same and other publishers have told him how small a public there would be for this or that volume of present-day verse of a different school, lovely and brilliant as it may be. Who form the following that makes the publication of a book of Mr. Auden's, or some other member of the school, a safe thing for the publisher—*that* (I have established this by very diligent enquiry) is a difficult thing to ascertain? Whatever way you proceed with the enquiry, whether by the discreeter way of just keeping your ears open, and noting, when poetry is talked of, what poets are mentioned, or by the more active way of the questioner, asking here and asking there such questions as: "Do you read modernistic verse, and, if you do, what do you make of it? Can you follow the sense? Or are you, like not the present Professor of Poetry at Oxford but his predecessor, content to find, not *meaning* in present-day verse, but its "slipshod relative *significance*?" The answers that one receives to those questions, and such others as are so easy to imagine, are usually in the negative, leading one, therefore and strongly, to suppose, that the following of

the Auden-Day Lewis school is more one that buys but not to read than one that buys *and* reads. Or, as you can well imagine of sheep following one another through the gap in the hedge, or jumping in turn over the stick that was held out in the air, but now is not, it is a following that reads without understanding, but not knowing it is without understanding; the satisfaction derived being that of knowing that a great many other people are reading these same words and lines without knowing what they are about. Not they any more than we! And what does that spell but just defeat of every one; defeat of them as mere parrot-readers, and defeat of us others, whose truer poetry is so blocked by this school's that we cannot get it published? What a thing to have to say in England!

Not that one ought to countenance any infringement of the true freedom of poetry. One does not want any one to be saying in England such words as are to be read in one of Brunetière's lectures, when, coming to the point of the inferiority of Racine, and indeed of all French writers save only Pascal and Bossuet, to Shakespeare and Goethe, and seeking the explanation, he attributes that inferiority to the influence of "les femmes et les gens du monde"; in short, of society. The poet anywhere must be free: he must be at liberty even to be obscure. All the same, is it not better that he should not be? Whom does it help, really; either Mr. Auden's readers or Mr. Auden himself, that he should write:

> Since you are going to begin to-day
> Let us consider what it is you do.
> You are the one whose part it is to lean,
> For whom it is not good to be alone.
> Laugh warmly turning shyly in the hall
> Or climb with bare knees the volcanic hill,
> Acquire that flick of wrist and after strain
> Relax in your darling's arms like a stone
> Remembering everything you can confess,
> Making the most of firelight, of hours of fuss;
> But joy is mine not yours—

when one has to read on to learn, first, who *you* are whose part it is to lean, and for whom it is not good to be alone; secondly, who it is that has the joy that is his and not the other's.

But let us read on:—

> to have come so far,
> Whose cleverest invention was lately fur;
> Lizards my best once who took years to breed,
> Could not control the temperature of blood.

Having read so far, a light breaks for one. This is supposedly a speech that Nature addresses to her creation Man, or may it not be? Will you, with me, allow, until we have more light on the subject, that we are listening to Nature addressing Man? And Nature, too, who does not always know her own creations too well; for what reason has she to say that her lizards, animals abounding in all warm coun-

tries, could not control the temperature of blood? What was to hinder them?

But let us read still further:

> To reach that shape for your face to assume,
> Pleasure to many and despair to some,
> I shifted ranges, lived epochs handicapped
> By climate, wars, or what the young men kept,
> Modified theories on the types of dross,
> Altered desire and history of dress

What are types of dross? One can understand an alteration in dress, or a hundred thousand alterations; but how do you alter the history of dress?

We began by being promised that some one (we hoped to learn who) would consider, seeing that you are going to begin to-day (whoever you are), what it is you do. Has that been considered? Do we now know what it is you do?

Suppose that it has been considered; that we do now know (all but my stupid self) what it is you do, has it been for some one's pleasure, guidance, edification, solacing, rapture? Or has whoever understands just been slightly bored?

That is the worst of "modern" poetry—it is such a bore!

The kind and degree of obscurity that must be part, one would argue, of "the freedom of poetry," is when the thought to be expressed is of matter so far beyond the circumference of the world within which man's general thought moves and has its being, that human language is inadequate to a presentment which should be sunclear. There is such matter expressed in the following lines of Wordsworth; lines, it is true, void of all mere grammatical obscurity, but containing deeper thought than any common men can claim any familiarity with:

> I was lost;
> Halted without an effort to break through;
> But to my conscious soul I now can say—
> "I recognise thy glory"; in such strength
> Of usurpation, when the light of sense
> Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed
> The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
> There harbours; whether we be young or old,
> Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
> Is with infinitude, and only there;
> With hope it is, hope that can never die,
> Effort, and expectation, and desire,
> And something evermore about to be.

To end with a question to Mr. Auden. Why should any one who has such verse as Wordsworth's to read, Milton's, Shakespeare's, not to go outside England, bother to read and puzzle out obscure "modern" stuff, after just one look to see what the "misbegotten child" is like?

J. A. CHAPMAN.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP :

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

The entry was larger than usual, and the quality remarkably high. These entries are judged, not on a purely competitive basis as regards each particular competition, but also in relation to the standard generally attained, and for this reason the list of those " Highly Commended " will be found this time to be longer than the list of those " Commended." It has also to be borne in mind that the entry of one single poem attaining the standard required secures the placing of the competitor in any particular list.

The outstanding poem this time is *Pilgrimage* by Reginald C. Eva, a philosophic poem in blank verse, of remarkable power and thoughtfulness. The Editor was tempted to award the sole premium to Mr. Eva, but, on further consideration, there were three others which could not be passed by. Miss Dougan's poem is also of a philosophic character, while the other two are lyrics, Miss Pargiter's contribution being a sonnet.

The awards are to :—Reginald C. Eva, Hove ; Margaret E. Stringer, Tipperary ; B. F. Pargiter, London, S.W. ; O. C. Dougan, London, N.

Amongst those " Highly Commended " especial mention must be made of E. Radcliffe Binnington, Dennis Birch, Pauline Huthwaite and Redcliffe McKie.

Highly Commended :

Vera I. Arlett, Worthing ;
E. Radcliffe Binnington, Louth ;
Dennis Birch, Lichfield ;
Langford Budville, Worthing ;
T. E. Casson, Ulverston ;
Cloudrider, Budapest ;
Alice E. Collinge, Harwood ;
Geoffrey Dobbs, London, W.C. ;
M. Edgelow, Gerrard's Cross ;
Margaret Lockerbie-Goff, London;
I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol ;
Chloris Heaton, Berkhamstead ;
Norah M. Horton, Burnley ;
Pauline Huthwaite, Hawksworth ;
I.M.L., Bridlington ;
R. McKie, Hove ;
Edith Mary Mann, Dovercourt Bay ;
C. Morton, Cwmtillery ;
Dómnall O'Connaill, Manchester;
T. Pittaway, Frome ;
Derek B. Reade, Tettenhall ;
Brenda F. Skene, London, W. ;
Margery Smith, Nottingham ;
A. M. Walker, Southport ;
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth ;
E. M. Walker, Ripon ;
William White, Edinburgh.

Commended :

Elizabeth Barrett, Seaford ;
F. T. Bratton, Wallingford ;
David Delaunay, West Wellow ;
R. G. Duff, Teignmouth ;
Dulcie Eden Greville, Wakefield ;
Hala Jean Hammond, Oklahoma ;
Irene H. Lewis, Leatherhead ;
Editha Melbourne, Maidstone ;
Enid Norman, Weston-super-Mare ;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland ;
Nancy Pollok, Glasgow ;
P. E. Procter, East Sheen ;
E. H. Ray, Whitchurch ;

Phoebe Rayner, Rivington ; Beresford Richards, Limavady ; Bertha Skeat, Bexhill-on-Sea ; Hilda M. Slade, Ramsgate ; Arthur Lynnford-Smith, Wanstead, E. ; C. B. Toosey, Welwyn Garden [City ; Mabel K. Toovey, Amersham.

The usual premium offer for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should reach "The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1," by April, 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.) It is essential that entrants to this competition be members of The Poetry Society or registered subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW, and that each poem bears the name and address of the author.

KUNIGUNDE DUNCAN, Wichita, Kansas, describes THE POET'S WHOLE DUTY:

This constant sky shall claim
To-morrow's songs, and be
Some strangely-seen, new-visioned prophesy
Pulsing a life my life cannot discern.
Best I return
From fancying that throng
To my own song,
Adding its simple rhyme
Of chanting robin in his nesting tree
To the great song of time.
Better to greet my sister, April rain,
Who runs to kiss my hand that drops the seed,
Or sing the pain
Of rose-red altar in the morning sky,
And tell how perfect lie
The dew-bright crocus, and the dew-bright weed.

LILY E. F. BARRY (Montreal) continues the addresses TO A MINOR BARD:

Your poetry is thin. I feel no beat
Of pulsing blood from heart to finger-tips
In the bleak lines. I see you with pale lips
In some wide room, intolerably neat,
Remote from common folk who pace the street,
Counting each laboured word that slowly drips
From a lean pen that never shakes nor slips
Through pangs of Memory, or Passion's heat.

You call it Poetry? Well, have your way,
Since the "fine frenzy" is to some denied,
If it lend glamour to an empty day,
Who would begrudge the harmless, minor pride?
A touch of rose, relieving the dull grey,
Diverting from despair, or . . . suicide!

Norah M. Horton, of Burnley, pays a very discerning tribute to A Critic:

You touch with surgeon's fingers, ruthless, light,
Illusion and lame phrase.
I like to watch you wrench your comment out
Neat as a statue from a block of thought,
Or, lapped in concentration, plunge
Into the silver radiances where truth
Like lost Excalibur lies hid.

The *Ars Poetica* is far from being Horace's master-piece, but the technical nature of this most discouraging epistle gives it an undying interest for poets, and many translations and imitations have appeared, writes our Horatian reviewer, Denis Turner. To the list is now added the version of Mr. G. E. Rees (published by the author at Gable Cottage, Thames Ditton, 6d.). I should like to deal first with a point that will interest only those who know their Horace.

Line 114 is translated:

Reflect what weighty difference it makes
If Cupid speaks or some obsequious slave.

But this reading (*Davusne loquatur Erosne*) is emphatically rejected by Orelli, and the best texts read "*divusne loquatur an heros*"—"if a god speaks or a mere demi-god." The translation as a whole reads pleasantly and, without being a "crib," is broadly faithful to the original. But it would have been better for revision, though I would not apply Horace's daunting advice to postpone publication for nine years. There are some rather ungainly inversions, e.g., "*Medea draw indomitable*"—*draw* being imperative; and casually here and there Alexandrines and rhymes occur, things which are better avoided in blank verse unless used to round off a section of a poem.

In the summer of 1938 Robert Browning first set foot in Asolo having walked there from Castelfranco and Bassano, and "delicious Asolo" (he called it) became his headquarters for four days. Always remembered, he returned to it 40 years later and wrote "Asolando" while the guest of his dear friend Mrs. Bronson who secured for him a small apartment near her villa Lamura. A tablet on the wall of the house occupied by the poet bears the inscription: *In questa casa abitò Roberto Browning, Vi scrisse Asolando* 1889. "The dearest place in the

world " he called it. The chief street in the town bears his name and his compatriots of both continents have always found a friendly and affectionate welcome from its inhabitants.

Asolo is the fortunate possessor of a good hospital and a first rate surgeon and doctor. A motor ambulance is however urgently needed to convey painlessly the patients from the plains and adjoining hills. Cases of patients with broken limbs being brought thither on a wheelbarrow are not rare, and the use of a horse and cart is common. Some of the British and American residents in Asolo suggest that it would be a gracious return for much kindness and happiness received, if foreign visitors and lovers of Asolo clubbed together to raise a sufficient sum to acquire a motor ambulance to be named " Roberto Browning " and to be offered to the hospital in occasion of the centenary of the poet's first visit here (1838–1938). This has now been achieved, Lord Iveagh having found the balance of the purchase money.

This year there will be a more general Browning anniversary, it being fifty years on December 2nd since he died in Venice. Arrangements are being made for the suitable commemoration of this event in Venice, Asolo, Florence and London. Members of The Poetry Society who are interested and can contribute or otherwise participate are invited to communicate with the Director. American co-operation in a " pilgrimage " in September is under consideration.

We are asked daily to identify odd lines of verse and cannot always oblige, nor can we undertake to publish such inquiries. But we make an exception in favour of an old member, Mrs. Donald Murray, 10 Boulevard de Belgique, Monte Carlo, who writes : I should very much like to know the author of the lines :

" For 'tis with words, as with sunbeams,
the more condensed the deeper they burn."

Perhaps you could also inform me of the name of the translator of the lines :

" For whom dost thou plant trees, old man ?
I plant them for my son Ulysees, when he comes home."

From what does this quotation come ?

There is also a further poem entitled " The Indian Hymn to Brahma" of which I should like to know the name of the translator. The poem runs :

" I am the mote in the sunbeam, and I am the burning sun ;
' Rest here ! ' I whisper to the atom ; I call to orb ' Roll on ! '
" I am the blush of morning, and I am the evening breeze ;
I am the leaf's low murmur, the swell of the terrible seas."

The poem is included in a little booklet entitled *Everybody's Book of Short Poems*, by Don Lemon, published by " W. R. Russell & Co., Ltd., Paternoster Row, London, E.C.," but a letter addressed to them was

returned to me marked " Gone away." If you can give me the name of the translator of the poem and the present address and name of the publisher, I shall be thankful.

There is another very charming poem about the wind talking to a little child, as follows :

" I am a weary southern wind that blows the live long day,
Over the stones of Babylon, Babylon, Babylon,
Over the stones of Babylon all fallen in decay."

Can you tell me the name of the author of this beautiful poem ?

This POETICAL APPRECIATION OF KEATS, gained for MARGARETE ROSE AKIN the " Fay Youger " Prize in the Poetry Study Club yearly seminar held at Wichita Falls, Texas :

Since all the higher operations of the intellect rest upon sensory foundations it is well that they be built of the most beautiful masonry that nature can offer.

Keats' poetry has been unequalled in descriptions of the beauties perceptible to the senses, such as form, colour, perfume or music. It was his mission to interpret the highest type of sensuous beauty.

The sensitiveness of Keats to all sense impressions made him an ardent admirer of nature. In his verse the colour, the form and the sounds of nature possess Circean charms. He delights to paint the " self-folding flower," the coming musk-rose full of dewy wine, the " murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves " and " sweet birds antheming the morning," " darkling I listen," he says, " and for many a time I have been half in love with easeful Death—called him soft names in many a mused rhyme, to take into the air my quiet breath."

Keats' Odes conform to the ten line stanza and iambic pentameter of the poets of his day. Although the Ode, strictly speaking, has no particular form, it is nearly always profound in subject and treatment, gravely philosophical or extremely lyrical. Robert Bridges, in his Essay on Keats, says : " Had Keats left us only his Odes, his rank among the poets would not be lower than it is, for they have stood apart in literature—at least, the six most famous ones, all written in his best period " . . . and the Ode to a Nightingale is said by Swinburne to be " the most fervent and musical one of them all." Though this Ode is a pure lyric, it is far from simple ; relying not only on rhyme and rhythm but also upon sound-harmony, or tone-colour. With reference to sight and sound, the " Ode to a Nightingale," bears the same relation to his " Ode to a Grecian Urn " as that existing between Wordsworth's " I wandered Lonely as a Cloud," and " The Solitary Reaper," in which we are assured " heard melodies are sweet but those unheard are sweeter."

Keats' poetry abounds in imagery and figurative language. His verse is full of rich deep harmonies. An old man's picture lies in

these few words: "Palsy shakes a few sad, last grey hairs." He slows the movement with the use of long a's . . . "where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin" . . . in "leaden ey'd despairs." . . . "Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes" contains high imagery and personification . . ." embalmed darkness" is true fine imagery. "A beaker full of the warm South" with "Beaded bubbles winking at the brim" appeals to the sense of taste and feeling and sight with its alliterative b's, the alliterative "fast fading violets covered up in leaves" should satisfy the most critical ear with its f's and v's to furnish the secretiveness of the violet.

The sonorous quality of his l's and n's introduced in the latter half of his most noted and quoted lines gives tone-colour to them . . . "Beauty is truth, truth beauty, that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know" . . .

"Forlorn! the very word is like a bell, To toll me back from thee to my sole self." The anapestic step of a "A thing of beauty is a joy forever," the opening lines of Keats' *Endymion*, has quickened the heart-beats of mankind for more than one hundred years, and will continue through other centuries its magical effect.

My personal reaction to Keats is one of keen interest due to an unusual, not to say, uncanny experience that I had at the beginning of my writing verse. I used a line of Keats before I had ever knowingly read any poem of his, or heard him quoted.

Willem Kloos, the Dutch *littérateur*, has died at The Hague. Born in Amsterdam in 1859, his poems earned him a great name in Holland. Between 1916 and 1934 he completed a standard work in twenty-three volumes entitled *The New History of Literature*. By his death, the *Times* stated, Holland loses one of its last links with the group of the 'eighties who by their foundation and exploitation of the *Nieuwe Gids* (New Guide)—of which Kloos became editor-in-chief—in 1885 and onwards created and encouraged a development of Dutch literature which is still continuing. Kloos was from the first its chief literary critic and also along with van Eeden and Verwey contributed a large amount of poetry to its columns. He was a keen admirer and disciple of Jacques Perk, who, like his patterns Keats and Shelley, died young, and carried on the work of renaissance started by this writer. Exact contemporaries, these two probably did more than any others to form modern Dutch poetry. Kloos in particular not only by his example but also by his historical and æsthetic studies encouraged his juniors to careful but bold experiment. He also made a number of carefully annotated editions of older Dutch writers, particularly of the eighteenth-century poet, Willem Bilderdyk, and the novelist of the same period, Rhijnvis Feith, and made a number of classical translations, among them being *The Imitation of Christ*. Some of his critics found a decline in his poetry after about 1894, but certainly some of his later work belied this criticism.

PATER AND PERFECTION

FOR reasons not yet clearly defined, it is imperative that persons of culture shall laugh at things Victorian. The whole body of Victorian art, literature, and architecture cowers beneath the ghoulish shadow of the aspidistra: and to enjoy things Victorian is nowadays a confession of ill-becoming *naïveté*. It is also, some say, a slight upon the incomparable achievements of the late 1930's. So be it. But to every rule there is an exception, and if there be anything Victorian at which reasonable men will not laugh, it is the work of Walter Pater, who was born at Shadwell, of Dutch-American parents, just one hundred years ago.

The bald facts of Pater's life are simple enough and rather dull. At the Queen's College, Oxford, he obtained only a second class in *Literæ Humaniores*—although one of his tutors, Dr. Jowett, remarked to him: "I think that you have a mind that will come to great eminence." In 1846, Pater became a Fellow of B.N.C., and started to write (1866–7) for the *Westminster Gazette*. He lived variously at Kensington and in the High at Oxford, sometimes travelling abroad with his sisters, but his true home was in his rooms at Brasenose, and in time he became a potent yet unobtrusive academic personage.

In a brief centenary note, the only question that can profitably be asked is—how does this writer's fame stand to-day, and why? The answer is straightforward and undisputed. Pater's fame to-day stands lower than ever it did, and for this the persiflage of Wilde is partly to be blamed. Now, every great writer has his popular self—the self-beloved of the slick journalist—and Pater's popular self, pallid and effete, stoops with tired eyes across a polished desk heavy-laden with philosophical notebooks. For one whole morning he scratches with quill pen, and then—*eureka!*—he has written the opening sentence.

But, do we understand Pater? Have we fairly considered all the small body of his writings? Or are we allowing ourselves deliberately and lazily to accept Pater at his popular estimation, as his popular self? Because he aspired to perfection, are we—smarting beneath the

knowledge of our own imperfection—afraid to be identified with such a man?

Renascence scholars would have called Pater a Humanist. Modern critics dub him æsthete. Well, if æsthetes seek perfection, then Pater was an æsthete. Obsessed by the ambition to write most beautifully, he pruned his work until, some think, he pulled the lifeblood from his own creations. How assiduously he pruned is revealed by the twelve years' interval between *Studies in The History of the Renaissance* and *Marius the Epicurean.*

Pater sought beauty and perfection—even the symmetrical layout of a newspaper could delight him—and in doing so he led a dangerous life. He was aware of this. He knew that his passion for beautiful sights, beautiful sounds, and beautiful experiences might, if misinterpreted, lead other, lesser, men into the primrose path of merely delectable dalliance. Thus, in the conclusion to his first book, he wrote " Every moment some form grows more perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or on the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real—for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end. A counted number of pulses only is given to us of a variegated, dramatic life. How may we see in them all that is to be seen in them by the finest senses?" This conclusion was omitted in the second edition of the book, because Pater " conceived that it might possibly mislead some of the young men into whose hands it might fall." But Peter's own integrity of spirit enabled him to sample where lesser men would have wallowed; it enabled him to live with beauty, but without velvet ties, large buttonholes, and an artificial complexion.

Unfortunately, he was unable (or unwilling) to admit that mortal men are not yet ripe for the attainment or even the enjoyment of perfection. He might, indeed, have agreed that a perfect child is an unspeakable little prig; but he would never have granted that a perfect prose style also may seem unacceptable. Pater's style suffers from a surfeit of academic pauses. Pater never nods; and the writer has

not yet been born who can afford never to nod. By never nodding, Pater lulls us all asleep. The perfection of his sentences is cloying, the smoothness of them deadly. They possess the limp perfection of strawberries and cream.

Consider for an instant the following extract, chosen altogether at random from one of Pater's books. He has been discussing Winckelmann's passion for the poetry of the antique world. "To most of us," he writes, "after all our steps towards it, the antique world, in spite of its intense outlines, its own perfect expression still remains, and must remain, it would appear, both faint and remote."

There, if ever there was, is balance—there rhythm, poise, and grace; but there are also the interminable academic commas, the bewildering parentheses, the never-ending smoothness. Critics who contrive not to have read sufficiently widely in Pater—if, indeed, they have read anything at all of his—usually apply to his books such epithets as exotic . . . hot-house . . . effete. They imply that Pater's writings were effete because Pater's mind and purpose were effete; actually, any effeteness there may be in Pater's writings is there because Pater's mind and purpose were the reverse of effete, because they led where style could not follow, because they exhausted style by their own virility.

Who reads Pater to-day? A few undergraduates, perhaps, and some dons. He is not popular. His popular self has offended its own creators. And yet, if a man read through all Pater's books he will assuredly discover therein very many pages which are neither exotic nor effete, but which shine with the gloss of valiant effort. Much we hear nowadays of new styles of prose and of new metres in verse; but we hear remarkably little of how Walter Pater spent a lifetime in the practice of adding grace to modern English writing. Perhaps we are in too much of a hurry. Yet, Pater may boast with the great Latin poet, *Exegi monumentum aere perennius*. For Pater's monument of effort was indeed more lasting than brass, but with the same burnished surface. Nor has it helped Pater that on this surface we may see reflected our own imperfections.

J. H. B. PEEL.

TO GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

(fifty years after his death, June 8th, 1889)

SELF-MAZED admonitory Nazarene,
Jesuit, and a woman in desire,
Big with an intellective Carmel fire
Burning seen loveliness to Faith unseen,
Peasant at heart, both Saxon and Hellene,
But disciplined in secret to aspire
To metric Eden, wherefore should your lyre,
So strangely chorded, move our age so mean?

Is it that we have still to learn the pang
Of weaning life from life's most frequent mark,
Accidie, traveller in Devotion's name,
Or that we should have stoned you when you sang,
Or rather that from you alone we hark
The racked soul-music that out-Langlands fame?

E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN.

THE FAERY MAIN

THE shore that daily slips from mortal view,
So weak our tireless effort to attain,
We may, dream-urged, in calm enchantment gain;
Like Noah's dove, which from the window flew
And never more returned, through ether blue,
The mind may wander on the faery main
Of fantasy, away from human pain,
And reach the land where falls the honey-dew.

There poor worn August is as fresh as May
While snows of winter peaceful silence wear,
And there the Lotos-tree puts forth her bloom
As anodyne to soothe the longest day
For weary ones who climb that mystic stair
And soar in freedom from convention's tomb.

T. PITTAWAY.

ON APPROACHING HOPKINS

ON June 8th, Gerard Manley Hopkins will have been dead fifty years. Since the publication of his *Collected Poems* in 1918 no other poet has exerted a greater influence on English poetry. Half the modern anthologies open with Hopkins, or at least include him; and most of the younger poets can claim (in the words of one of his early poems), "I have caught fire from this contagious sun." He has, in fact, become something of a craze in literary circles; even the more conventional critics and readers, seeing him praised in the *Sunday Times*, and learning that he has been dead for a respectable time, was once a Professor of Greek, had his poems edited by Robert Bridges and published by the Oxford University Press, even they have been forced to admit his importance (although many still prefer "a comfortable and quiet home out of the way of all Hopkinses and black beetles"[1]). But he has hardly yet become a "Potato Poet," a Poet of the People, as apparently he wished to be;[2] fewer people have heard of him than of Van Gogh, Epstein or Eliot; and I note that the last edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is without an article on him. It is time that he were more *widely* known and read, first as a poet, secondly as critic and prose writer.

Although the approach to Hopkins can never be made easy, it can, perhaps ought to be, simplified. Even omitting the long *Wreck of the Deutschland*, the poems should not be read in strict chronological order. After reading three early poems, 2, 3, and 83 (his first published poem; printed in a weekly in 1863), the reader should turn to such poems as 31, 13, 8, 7, 9, 19 and 33. Even in these apparently simple pieces it will be seen that close, alert readings are essential: *Spring and Fall*, for instance, makes greater demands on the intellect than Wordsworth's lyrics of the same genre, while such condensed images as those at the opening of *Binsey Poplars* had been unknown in English poetry for two whole centuries. It will now be time to turn to the excellent Introduction by Charles Williams—excellent,

[1] Keats: Letter to Bailey, Oct., 1817.

[2] Patmore refers to this in answer to one of Hopkins' letters which unfortunately cannot be found. *Further Letters of G. M. Hopkins*, p. 207.

that is, on the whole, but containing the unfortunate remark that " the poet to whom we should most relate him " is Milton. To have said " Donne and his followers " would have been more correct, and an acquaintance with the metaphysicals is almost certain to be an aid in our approach to Hopkins ; but the question of his ancestry I have gone into in an essay in the June number of *Poetry* (Chicago).

Poems 10, 11, 14, 15, 20, 22, 29, 43, 33, 30, 37, 36, and such magnificent fragments as 58, 56 and 72 should then be read, some if possible with the help of his own remarks on them in the *Letters*. " One thing I am now resolved on," he wrote to Bridges two years before his death, " is to prefix short prose *arguments* to some of my pieces." The remarks on Nos 11 and 36, for instance, are especially illuminating. But the costliness of the fine scholarly editions of the *Letters* (46s. in all) and the *Notebooks* (another 25s.) unfortunately limits their accessibility.

Before going on to the rest of the poems the reader should turn to the essay by the Rev. M. D'Arcy, S.J. in *Great Catholics*, 1938, the most discerning appraisal of his character so far written, and one that ought to clear up the general misunderstanding in regard to it. Many of these poems demand intensive study ; and I remember how some years ago at Oxford I and five other undergraduates, one of them reckoned the most brilliant scholar in Balliol, spent most of an evening on *The Windhover*, only to admit in the end our sheer inability to construe the meaning (at least, each thought it meant something different). On this and many other poems there are some useful pages in *The Poetry of G. M. Hopkins* by E. E. Phare. But the book is extremely uneven : there are many unnecessary and superficial pages and some unprofitable comparisons with Massinger, Crashaw and Wordsworth. The reader, by now more familiar with the mind of Hopkins, with his special prosody, vocabulary and manipulation of syntax, will be able to tackle *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, that great poem which should make 1876 as much of a landmark in literary history as 1798. And fortunately we have the very helpful critique by W. H. Gardner in *Essays and Studies*, 1938.

Much has now been written on Hopkins, especially during the last eight years. The short *Life* (1930) by Father Lahey, S.J., based on the now published Notebooks, Papers and Letters, though likely to be superseded, is still valuable. Many essays, some of permanent interest, are scattered through books and English, Irish, American, even Italian periodicals, but only the deepest student will wish to bother about them, unless it be about the Hopkins Number of *New Verse* (April, 1935) and a couple of chapters of wide interest in *This Modern Poetry* by Babette Deutsch, 1936. Herbert Read's essay (in *Critical Essays of the Twentieth Century* and elsewhere) has, I know, been much praised, but for me (and I am not a Roman Catholic) it is somewhat vitiated by his inability to grasp the ultimately religious inspiration in Hopkins—to see that the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius formed " the very stuff and not merely the accidental channel of Hopkins' poems."[1] What should be more important is the book, due sometime this year, promised us by Humphry House, who has given us so admirable an edition of the Notebooks. In the end, however, it is the poet's own prose that must be our approach to the poems: not only the explanatory references to particular poems, or the more general statements of first principles,[2] but almost the whole body of the prose is of extraordinary interest and must largely determine our orientations. Hopkins, as one of his editors observes, " is all of a piece " ; but the relation between prose and poem ought to be clearly understood.

R. P. Blackmur, a notable American critic, defines it in a recent review of the third volume of *Letters*: ". . . the more life or mind," he says, " the more extraneous material of any sort, you introduce into the study of a poem as belonging to it, the more you violate the poem as such, and the more you render it a mere document of personal expression. There is a gap between the poem and its inspiration or source of which the sense must be kept, in any study of it, as open, as yawning, even as precipitous. If

[1] *The Ignatian Inspiration of Gerard Hopkins*, by Christopher Devlin, S.J., in *Blackfriars*, 1935.

[2] How regrettable it is that they are not complete essays!

you find yourself bridging the gap with information, you have either discovered a failure in the poem or have misconceived the poem. There remains, however, with material like that of these and the earlier letters a delicate but just operation which consists in digesting it for its own sake and, at the same time, feeling it in parallel to the poems, feeling the gap between them, until finally, so to speak, you will have crossed the gap without bridging it."[1]

Some such approach as I have indicated will, I hope, assist all those who have never looked into the (main) father of modern poetry, or have done so but casually and perhaps with little success. It will be noticed that in all but the last group (according to my arrangement) the majority of the pieces are nature poems. Hopkins is one of the very greatest and richest of our nature poets—a fact that alone should recommend him to thousands of new readers. Even in the last group, *The Wreck of the Deutschland* and the terrible sonnets, his images, like Shakespeare's, are largely drawn from nature. It is the poems of this group that are the most difficult of all, demanding as they do intense activity on the part of the reader, whose maturity moreover must be presupposed. As with the Holy Sonnets of Donne and the greater poems of Yeats's third period, lack of general experience is inevitably a disqualifying factor in their appreciation. And yet one day, unless education changes very considerably, we shall probably have our sons and grandsons standing up in the classroom to recite " I wake and feel the fell of dark " or " No worst, there is none." It may be that another Stratford, that in Essex where Hopkins was born in 1844, will become an object for pilgrimages ; and, as at Shakespeare's, for every pilgrim who has read the poet there will be fifty who have never looked at a line since their examination days. You can see them swarming in from all quarters, not only

> "from elmy England,
> But from beyond seas, Erin, France and Flanders, everywhere,
> Pilgrims, still pilgrims, more pilgrims, still more poor pilgrims."

TERENCE HEYWOOD.

[1] *The Kenyon Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Winter, 1939.

CHRISTOPHER HASSALL'S *PENTHESPERON*

I AM tired of hearing about the " functions " of Poetry. A poet is " a Mushroome, on whom the Dew of Heaven drops now and then," and is, like the mushroom, rare, precious and accidental. If he has any Function at all, it is to keep the rest of us alive. " There are three whole worlds at our disposal: the world that is, of which we know something: the world that will be, of which we know nothing: and the world that never was and never will be, of which we know everything." Only the trouble is that this third world is so easily ignored; we so easily fall asleep and see events around us like casual shadows in a mirror. The phenomena of the world that is have no significance whatever, except only when they alter the world within. Every instant of every day an endless stream of impressions flows by and envelopes us, asleep or awake: and all impressions are equally unmeaning. They have no life in themselves: it is only we who make them live. " The tree," said Blake, " which moves some to tears of joy is in the eyes of others only a green thing which stands in the way." It is terrifyingly possible to spend nine-tenths of one's life without even being conscious of this inward world, without even guessing that one can die many years before the worms enjoy one. For the soul can age and fade independent of the body. Nothing we shall ever see again can be so intolerably vivid as some of the tiny pictures from the past: and the further back we go, the more vivid they become, because we start life alive and it kills us imperceptibly. Moments of real sight and feeling grow rarer and rarer till they go altogether and we are dead. The really strange thing about this is that it should be, on the whole, so easy and comfortable to go walking as a corpse about a world in which we were once alive. We can at times recapture the echo of ecstasy, the ghost of early summer mornings or the dew on the darkening Green: and can think as we thought when we were children, in a different dimension of time. But most of us grow, as FitzGerald used to say, a little Poddy. *Non sum*

qualis eram bonae sub regno Cynarae—these can seem the saddest words ever written: they can mean a glimpse of what experience can take away and only poetry recall, a sense of the slow inevitable wheel turning in one's life as relentlessly as the gradual crusting of the years. A good many more people would cut their throats, if they could really set to-day next door to yesterday. It is pleasanter to fall very gently asleep, till yesterday fades into a beautiful melancholy pink fog; and so to die without suffering, blurring the ragged edges, till the intolerable happiness of the past is one with its intolerable pain.

Which is why most people secretly hate poetry, as a comfortable corpse safely coffined might hate the Last Trump. It is too pleasantly easy for us to forget reality in the narrow horizon of our dreams: and we instinctively hate those who remind us that we are miracles, that we are articulate trees of bone pulsing with driven blood, walking in the sunlight, arguing with God. The poets are there to toll our funerals for us: and we despise and fear and persecute our too eager undertakers. *A distaste for poetry is the first infallible symptom of death.*

I am moved to these rather ponderous reflections, because I have heard enough about the Defence of Poetry,—as if it were not an absolute necessity to any sort of a life above that of a Neanderthal cave-dweller; and because, in recent years, it does not seem to have kept man alive, but rather to have become the possession of a secret society, whose high priests expound its significance in terms only one degree less obscure than their texts; and finally because, in the work of a few fine craftsmen, poetry is once more becoming a channel of communication between sensitive minds.

Mr. Christopher Hassall's latest poem, *Penthesperon* (Heinemann), is a challenge to those who think that, what with the decorative semi-colons of the "Modernists" and all the intolerable newness of *New Verse*, poetry is no longer the affair of the ordinary man but something at once esoteric and unreal. *Penthesperon* is sincere instead of solemn, it is interesting instead of being unintelligible, and

it breaks every canon of "Modernist" poetry by being easy to read. Criticism at best is only a kind of gossip; it can speculate about the irrelevant, like the gentleman who thought that *In Memoriam* "evidently came from the full heart of the widow of a military man," or it can torture itself with subtleties, like the ingenious Dr. Collet. The only excuse for gossiping about a poem that speaks so admirably for itself is the desire to share a good thing with others: and that is the only excuse I can offer for this article.

Penthesperon is Mr. Hassall's most mature work, and shows the qualities of his earliest poems ripened and enriched, the crudities toned down; the narrative is easier than in *Devil's Dyke*, the rhythms more flexible than in *Christ's Comet*. It is, I think, the most important contribution to poetry that has appeared for some years. These *Five Evenings* present

> "Their own variety of mood and texture;
> For such is life itself, the envy of
> Culpeper, an unsorted meadowland,
> Where whoso will may pluck the healing leaf
> And hebenon together, and distil
> Their properties into song."

And they do so with an extraordinary variety of mood and texture, modern in their unexpectedness and realism, traditional in their rhythmic ease and fluency. Mr. Hassall is steeped in the accents of certain poets of the past; the opening words of the *Dedication* show clearly enough his debt to Browning:—

> "Good morning, mind your elbow on the door,
> It's like a fly-paper to catch your sleeve.
> Last Saturday the painters came, and daubed
> So lavishly to cover last year's coat,
> A month won't see it dry. Imagine it,
> A crimson door! Who would have wish'd their friends
> To knock upon so garrulous a colour?"

He is a clever *pasticheur* when he likes, and catches here and there the manner of Beddoes or Browning, the very voice of the eighteenth century with a dangerous fluency. The second evening, *Homage to Crabbe*, is a deliberate echo of the

Tales, but it is also something more. Mr. Hassall shares Crabbe's sincerity and sympathy and has something of his trenchancy of phrase—

> " Since the demand for cotton, pins and tape
> Persists while Modesty conceals the shape,
> And ravenous laundries, regular as clocks,
> Feast on our buttons, and engorge our socks."

It is not so far behind

> " Now to the church behold the mourners come,
> Sedately torpid and devoutly dumb."

But Mr. Hassall has a pleasanter humour than Crabbe's, and none of his congenital gloom. He reveals a grace and tenderness which Crabbe lacked, and an imaginative power which is more reminiscent of Beddoes.

But it is sorry work to talk of a poet as if he were a kind of inferior cocktail of his predecessors, and I do not imply that *Penthesperon* would have been the result if Crabbe and Browning had collaborated in a revision of *Death's Jest Book*. I don't know where else but in himself Mr. Hassall found the delicious humour of *The Red House* or *Fact and Fantasy*, the easy grace of his conversations, or the elusive intimacy of his style. It is not an easy thing to convey the illusion of reality when men have to argue in rhymed couplets ; it is still harder to draw a character without turning it into something arbitrary and stilted—and yet I cannot recall a single person in all these stories who is not deftly and palpably alive. If responsibility is to be placed anywhere but on Mr. Hassall's shoulders for his faults, I would blame the eighteenth century for the occasional dulness or pomposity of his epithets. Sometimes they seem suspiciously like padding. I dislike the " plural stars " and the " ocean-purposed stream " ; but his curious and periphrastic use of the conceit is wholly admirable when he describes a lake as

> " A paradise of penetrable glass,
> And leafy elbow-room all round "

or when he speaks of the " glazed precision of a car " or of Juliet

> " Leading her velvet revellers through the jig,
> Now joining hands, now at the brisk down-beat
> Pointing the simultaneous toe."

Here is a whole picture compressed into a single word. It is when the reverse process happens that one feels that Mr. Hassall is on the verge of using what Warburton used to call his " Tall voice." Poetic diction is only a phrase meaning that too much fuss is being made over a trifle; that the object is too frail to bear the burden of its description. Sometimes Mr. Hassall's tall voice is magnificently appropriate. There is splendour in these lines :—

> " Earth that had slumbered under forest mould
> Since first this Continent was heaved out of
> The sea, leapt sideways from the shining share
> And looked indignant at the sky; distance
> Grew ribs, and still the oxen strained."

Of these I am not so certain :—

> " Consider how that caricature of eagles,
> That metal passover, the aeroplane,
> Travels the short preliminary grass,
> Raises her limp earth-confiscated wheels,
> Soars like ambition through the swallowing clouds
> With song of thunder and bright chest of steel,
> Then hums to heaven, balanced on a star."

And I don't feel that even the wild grotesquerie of *Roast Serpent* prevents these from reminding the reader of Cowper's rustic, adjusting the fragrant charge of the short tube that fumed beneath his nose :

> " Then he prepared his pipe, unrolled his pouch,
> And still imagining, loaded the bowl
> With automatic thumb, slowly took out
> A match, struck it, waited until the snarl
> And sulphurous hysteria became
> Cool as a candle, then inhaled, blinking above the bobbing flame.
>
> Thus fortified against the world, he slung
> The miniature charred rafter of a match
> Into the stream . . ."

The tendency to force a plain statement into poetry by wrapping it in elaborate figures is out of key with Mr. Hassall's work at its best. But, at its best and in its place,

how superbly apt is that polysyllabic elaboration of phrase : " Down zig-zag plumbing of the inner man " or

" The last gelatinous segment of its tail
Smacks kindly on the tongue, and once cut off
(As is the case with the whole genus Snake)
Quickly recovers from the injurious knife
And grows afresh. This tit-bit must you lop
From the original trunk, with scrupulous exactitude of chop."

Both these quotations are taken from *Roast Serpent*, with *Fact and Fantasy*, the most remarkable poem in *Penthesperon*. It was a stroke of sheer genius to place this poem precisely where it is, two-thirds of the way through the book ; a sudden unexpected astringency between the gay adventurousness of *Fact and Fantasy* and the quieter speculations of *Pudding-Stone*. In Mr. Hassall's earliest poems there was a touch of the *Arabian Nights* : he struck now and then a note almost Oriental in its effect—the air became heavy with strange incense and the subterranean darkness luminous with incredible eyes. There was a danger that this imitation poetry might swamp the clarity and ease of Mr. Hassall's writing at its best ; and now, in *Penthesperon*, after many curious mutations, it has become a powerful talent for the grotesque. The rhetoric of words has been transformed to the magnificently crazy rhetoric of the imagination. Grotesquerie is the flowering of the highly improbable into the richly impossible ; and in *Roast Serpent* Mr. Hassall's mind has played fantastic knuckle-bones with a paragraph from one of Beddoes' letters. It is instructive to watch how these gorgeous flowers have blossomed from one small sardonic seed. Mr. Hassall begins on a low-pitched note, and warms gradually to his work. The controlled humour of the opening grows wilder—with a touch of the uproarious high-spirits of the *Pied Piper* :

" The Burgomaster in his curtained bed
Dreamt of a muffin-man whose buns were toys,
(The sort you offer to a backward guest—
He bites, and hears a mew like Sunday shoes.)
His Nibs was doling bagfuls to the poor,
When he was startled out of sleep by paradiddles on the door."

And then the last bonds of probability are loosened, and

we are miles from the world of fact, walking in a nightmare of dancing skeletons and cobwebbed cellars, wizards and pentacles and spell-chained toads :

" Without a word, distracted Jethro flashed
His blade, and something yielded to the stroke.
It fell, and then he spied a little man,
A midget with an executed neck,
Down on his knees, groping along the sand ;
So Jethro picked the severed headpiece up, and placed it in his hand.

" The dwarf put on his topknot like a hat,
Screwed it until the features faced the front,
Then worked his lips, and spluttered as a man
Who tries to fix a collar-stud, but can't.
Slowly the veins fell back into position ;
One crowning struggle, and Homunculus regained his prime condition."

The whole of the brilliant lunacy of the bookworm episode has been spun from the bewildered air ; there is no hint of it in Beddoes. And I find myself haunted by a remembrance of that ancient league-long Worm, dreaming on " the hair's-breadth border between life and death " in its sunless cavern.

But, above all, here is a fine story bravely told. There are so many narrative poets, and so few who have the gift of narrative. Chaucer, Morris, Masefield, Browning, Crabbe—these could all tell a story well ; so can Mr. Hassall. He lacks much, but he has the gift of dramatic presentation, he can write a play that really is a play as well as a poem, he can write a story that really can be read because one wants to find out what happens next, as well as because it contains passages of fine poetry. There is no mistaking the genuine story-teller ; he betrays himsel with his opening words. There is a directness, a stimulating economy, a sense of movement in the first paragraphs of all the great stories ; they do not " wind into their subject like a serpent," but strike into it at once, with memorable words. " Palestine Soup," said the Reverend Doctor Opimian. . . . One of the writings of Chuang Tzu begins :—" In the state of Lu there was a man named

Wang T'ai who had his toes cut off." Mr. Hassall too has the authentic touch :

" The time was dwindling summer, and the place
Kensington Gardens . . ."

" Assistant master at the village school,
A man who lived precisely by the rule,
Simple of dress and scrupulous of speech,
Philip was born to study and to teach."

" Marina Cottage stands beside the sea ;
One of a stuccoed block whose seven doors
Open directly on the spray . . ."

He is happiest when he works on a large canvas, for his verse is cumulative, not concentrated. His lyrics lack that intensity and precision which are the secrets of magic, and his felicities are more often in paragraphs than in phrases. One feels he has so much to say and is so eager to say it that he has not the patience to load his rifts with ore, but will play lovingly round his ideas, enlarging and elaborating with a breathless piling-up of adjective and simile—

" In and out the taper trees
Torches were throwing energetic shadows ;
Sleighs like an elfin navy sailed the frost,
And those who rode in them were human bears,
So up to the eyes in fur, in sparkling fur
Bespattered with the powdery spray churned up
On their precarious journey."

" Torchlight flattered their pippin cheeks :
Evening was all aflame ; the very pines
Chuckled along their roots and shook down silver ;
Night blossomed into happy lamps, and men
Forgot the stars."

He diffuses, never compresses. The purely lyric poet is as a rule static, close-packed with imagery, his thought concentrated, so that one word will bear the weight of five ; his is the magic one finds in certain verses of the *Ancient Mariner*, in Poe's *City in the Sea*, in nearly every poem by Walter De la Mare. It is, in them, often sheer abracadabra ; it even gains by being intranslatable and its mysterious music continues for a while after one has put aside the poem

to echo and reverberate down endless enchanted corridors. " Porphyrogene ! " How this word in the *Haunted Palace* once bewitched me ! And yet the magic of Poe's magical poem was almost ruined when I learnt the allegory that underlay it ; when I knew that the yellow banners were Roderick Usher's hair and that magnificent King only a mortal brain. Poetry can be as " meaningless " as it chooses, provided only it retains its one essential quality, the power of stimulating the imagination.

> " O Sunflower, weary of Time,
> Who countest the steps of the Sun ! "

What is in those words that can so hale the heart out of a man's body ?

Of this particular necromancy there is little trace in Mr. Hassall's poetry. Nor can one find it, except rarely, in any true narrative poet : only here and there in Browning and William Morris, only here and there even in Chaucer. The narrative poet owns a different magic, a cumulative, overflowing magic, not shining out suddenly like a star, but glowing in the very heart and body of his poem. And because he enlarges and digresses instead of crystallizing, he is seldom quotable.

If the lyric poet runs the risk of becoming merely lapidary, playing so subtly with words that they lose all life to lie frozen in a glittering perfection, the narrative poet runs an equal risk of becoming too loose and sprawling. This is Mr. Hassall's particular danger. He is so completely *born* to write and so at ease with a pen, that he at times grows careless. " Poetry comes as naturally to him as leaves to a tree " : but she is no easy mistress.

There is little evidence in *Penthesperon* of any but occasional garrulities or flatness. Mr. Hassall has forged for himself a marvellously supple instrument. There is an astonishing ease and fluidity in his iambics and the gradual paragraph-measures of his narrative ; and everywhere there sounds " the one low piping note more sweet than all," the music that makes poetry. It is a quiet, subtle music, " not loud nor wildly tumbling to a close," a music that reminds me of the flowing line of Fletcher, particularly in his

descriptive passages; and which yet can tighten into a swift epigrammatic crispness. The rhythmic variety of *Penthesperon* is no less remarkable than its variety of subject. Like Browning, Mr. Hassall will alter his music continually as his moods alter. Sometimes it is grave and rich and full, as in these very lovely lines:

> " Out in the merry fields
> It is the same, where the unwanted apple
> Lies underneath a bough whose outstretch'd hands
> Toss leaves like coppers to the begging wind.
> That fruit, sitting achieved among the dew,
> Rosy with edible and drum-skin girth,
> Is fast assimilated by the ground,
> And haunts the world of roots with memories
> Of distant bird-song and bright amorous days
> That flushed her bitter rind."

He describes, as Crabbe describes, always with his eye on the object; and he has Crabbe's gift of weaving his descriptions into the very body of his story, so that quotation tends to be unfair. His pictures are an inalienable part of the story he is telling, and his rhythms lose their half their magic torn from their context. I have quoted from Mr. Hassall's iambic couplets and his blank verse; here is a worn old metre ruined by barrel-organ repetitions and schoolroom recitals of Byron and Cowper, suddenly brought back again as fresh and sparkling as ever:

> " The candle-flame crocuses glitter and glimmer,
> So rigid, so waxen, on perishing wicks
> And woodpecker masons have started to hammer,
> To make a big piccolo out of the cherry;
> The delicate mouse is at sport in the ricks,
> While chimneys of pottery, red as a berry,
> Breathe over the roofs the blue spirit of sticks."

The same technical mastery is shown in another lyric, in *Roast Serpent*, where the iambic rhyme-scheme of the poem suddenly breaks into an anapaestic treatment of the same pattern. It was Oscar Wilde who was the first to make somewhat unhappy experiments with the iambic heptameter closing a verse of five alternately rhyming pentameters. The sudden unexpected ripple is a continuous irritation at the end of every verse of *Charmides*. Mr.

Hassall, in *Prelude*, varies this scheme with ingenious alternate assonance and rhyme, three iambic pentameters and then a long eight-beat line. In a descriptive poem this has the effect of speeding, then slowing up and rounding off each verse with an exquisite gradation—

"Brighter it grew, and narrow as the ray
Shot by red windows on a chancel floor;
Over the grass it burned and every tree
Within its track became a glinting cloud of intricate filigree."

It has much the same effect as the Spenserian alexandrine, which slows down the movement of the verse to half its pace, thereby creating a drawn-out pause in the music, which, however lovely in single stanzas, breaks the narrative into a series of separate pictures. But when Mr. Hassall turns to the same form in *Roast Serpent*, he gives body and movement to the verse by adding two extra lines. He has a tactful ear—how else should he manage the lovely light controlled measure of *To an Unborn Child*, one of the best of his lyrics; nothing is harder than to rein in this difficult swaying, delicate music.

I have mentioned only one or two of the qualities of *Penthesperon*. These five evenings show many contrasted moods: the amused and meditative contentment of the *Prelude*, the tenderness of the *Soliloquy to Imogen*, the gay, the comic, the adventurous, the frankly crazy, all rounded to a close in the final symposium. It is a happy book; yet there is a continual faint undertone of sadness, even in its most idyllic moments. No modern writer can ever recapture that lost note in poetry—

"I call, I call. Who do ye call?
The maids to catch this cowslip-ball."

That note, so exquisite, so sophisticated, above all so secure, is as unattainable now as the Maypole and its hay-de-gays. We have gained much. Our interests are wider, our sympathies more universal; catastrophe has enriched us. But we can only catch a fleeting echo of that ecstasy. The milkmaids of Herrick are as remote from us as the shepherds of Theocritus. Their world was a very real one, but it is not our world; its walls have crumbled.

Penthesperon is not a retreat to the shepherds of the seventeenth or the urns of the eighteenth centuries; what it possesses in common with Crabbe, or Cotton, or Henry King is what genuine poetry has possessed in every age—the power to light up the commonplace from strange angles, and to give us in our greeting of the world around a new and intenser awareness.

RONALD FULLER

THE GREY MONKEY

I COME from the forest
A little grey ghost,
I, alone,
From an innumerable host
I come to sit on your pillows
And whisper of things that have been.

Over the water,
The starlit and cruel grey water,
I come to sit on your pillows
And whisper into your ear
Things that are strange to hear,
Things half remembered in dreams
Of the days you were happy,
My daughter.

So now I sit
On your stiff starched pillows,
And I hear
The cold grey sea
That sucks at the sullen sand.
And I feel
The clammy vapour
That drifts across the land;
That land of mist and marsh,
Walled round by curling billows.

—Are you happy like this, my daughter,
As you lie in your linen sheets

And hear the cold rain as it beats
On a soil that is soaked with chill water?—

Soon I shall return
To the dim dark forest;
Above the dark forest
There in the clear sunlight,
Where the lianas trail
From tree top to tree top,
I shall leap through the branches,
Swinging my tail
Like a furry flail,
There in the clear sunlight
That gilds the far off snow
On the mountain peaks.

I shall leap through the boughs
Where the bright blossoms cluster,
I shall swing on the creepers
That link the green tree tops;
Where the gay parrots muster
And shriek through the tree tops
As they ruffle their feathers
Red, green and yellow,
To peck at the fruit
That hangs luscious and yellow.

—Do you not remember, my daughter,
The branches that tossed in the breeze
When you sprang through the tops of the trees,
Now you dream by the cold grey water?—

Soon I shall return
To the dim green forest.
Above the dark forest
I shall swing through the tree tops
I shall leap through the blossoming boughs,
Where the humming birds

Winnow the air
With the flash of their emerald wings,
As they hover
O'er orchids rare;
While the butterflies
That are blue as the skies
Flit like jewelled eyes.
And the great sloth swings
On his leisurely way.

Or perchance I shall rove
By a watery swamp,
Through the tangled grove
I shall joyfully romp;
There by the banks of a mighty river,
On the muddy shoals, where the waterweeds quiver
I shall play with my brother,
We shall chase one another,
I and my grey furry brother.

Soon I shall forget
You, my sad daughter,
As you lie on your stiff starched pillows.
I shall return
To the dark primeval forest;
There through the tree tops
In the clear sunlight
I shall leap, swinging my tail
Like a furry flail,
And I shall forget
That your cheeks were wet
With tears,
My poor, sad daughter,
In your home by the old grey water.

PERI BLACK.

[This poem has been awarded this year's laurel wreath of the Sussex Poetry Society,—the second time that our contributor has gained this recognition for her work.—Ed.]

SUCCESS AND FAILURE

WHATEVER may lie at the bottom of the new spirit in literature it is certain that the intellectual camp is divided into those who have a fanaticism for alien ideologies, and the others who, overcome by the tempestuous current of disintegration, seek in curious ways an answer to their doubts: but these ways, by-paths, as exploited by the more stable contemporary writers, however honest their intentions, inevitably lead to the same type of ideology flaunted by politico-literary sects. A chief characteristic of the contemporary scene is the playing-up of "profound conflicts," the dramatising of social decay for a particular theory, or, as in some cases, the handling of a spiritual issue for the sake of experiment or the satisfying of mental conceit. Many critics and philosophers, many poets and novelists seem to conceive that theorising is itself literature: they worship thinking as a barbarian would an idol, they seek in experiment, not a way to more sublime truths, not an evolution to deeper spiritualisation, but a short cut to a pseudo-superiority, a shady vale where all things are congenial and comfortable in their stupidity. The parties and movements of this "state" are possibly similar to a century ago, with this profound difference—the past, as history, lies before us with its hard, irrevocable lesson; the present is nebulous because we refuse to admit that we are the realities which make for the future, and in our assumption that life is a repetition of a well-worn pattern we forget that, though the design may be similar, there is a difference in the texture and colour. By that I mean to suggest that in our concern for the solidities of the social structure we have lost the vitality with which to regenerate the future, and where there is this concern, this seeming fear for all that is healthy, the vigour with which life defends itself is being evaded and slowly exterminated. Life is like the sun, and the stars and the evening rain—it has a purpose and a use, but to-day it is being wasted through lamentation and, I might add, isolation. Instead of being a well-loved reality it is a doubtful thing.

Reading Mr. T. S. Eliot's *Family Reunion* (Faber), an

essential dream reality in the full classical sense, a grouping of characters on two planes, a psychological analysis of expiation and sin, an attempt to find a foothold in the belief that conscience (if I read Mr. Eliot correctly) ends with death, I am confirmed in my deduction that Mr. Eliot has betrayed his own conscience. In order, however, to comprehend this we must examine the artistic structure first because it reflects in narrative the Atridae, and is moulded after the Greek fashion. It is admitted that the impulse which engendered the classical audience's interest in tragedy was familiarity with the story. Interest centred round the actors' genuflexions, the sweep and detail of the choruses, and the imaginative vigour of language. Here we observe that communal spirit so much lauded by modernists; in *Family Reunion* that intimacy is destroyed by obscurity. Mr. Eliot craves that we be acrobats, travelling from one place to another, and his picturing of destiny and evil is so clouded by an evident mental—or shall I say?—spiritual dubiety that the obvious demands for smoothness are not met. Somehow there is no moral elevation, no joyous spiritualization as a convert might attain from recognition of the past's error—only a morbidity of language, however lovely and at moments approaching to tenderness, and, I fear, an unavailing attempt to classify a mystical experience.

I do not intend to relate the story, but I do feel that Mr. Eliot, despite his successful experiment of writing everyday speech in irregular blank verse, has worked on badly tilled soil. Agatha " philosophizing " over Harry's parentage and her love for his father; the constant dream-world of Amy, Harry's mother; the unsatisfactory though constantly reiterated hint that Harry threw his wife into the sea, thus fulfilling the strain of heredity in an anaemic family; the visitation of the Eumenides, and Harry's final decision to leave all—for suicide? or a new life? The drift of these things presents not tragedy with the inevitable moral, but a huge wasteland of satirical nuances.

Here we must observe Mr. Eliot's handling of the dream as reality, i.e., the imaginative presentation of the Eumenides (Conscience, Remorse and Destiny). But in the classical

world dreaming, whatever spiritual meaning it imputed, was an essential background to living, a background which quickened life to intelligence; Mr. Eliot, instead of making his dream-reality act as a corrective and a purifyer, rushes his leading man into a fatalistic future. In short, *Family Renuion* is not a thesis on the finer side triumphing over weakness but a regrettable plea for every, rightly or wrongly, suicidal act. If we are to accept

> This way the pilgrimage
> of expiation
> Round and round the circle
> completing the charm
> So the knot be unknotted
> The crossed be uncrossed
> The crooked be made straight
> And the curse be ended. . . .

then Mr. Eliot is outside the Christian tradition and the meanest form of theology. Of course, I may be wrong in my interpretation, but Mr. Eliot's obscurity has not helped me to any degree of certainty. As a poetic work *Family Reunion* has many virtues, and I think that Part Two is a delightfully evocative interlude. Everywhere one can trace the manner of the Waste Land and Ash Wednesday, the repetitive

> I have always told Amy she should go south in the winter.
> Were I in Amy's position, I would go south in the winter.
> I would follow the sun, not wait for the sun to come here,
> I would go south in the winter. . . .

And

> . . . I would never go south, no, definitely never,
> Even could I do it as well as Amy;
> England's bad enough, I would never go south. . . .

Indeed, Mr. Eliot is concerned again and again with mind, but where, sir, is the intelligence of mind in the responses of your characters? We have Agatha's "irrevocable and irremedial," Harry's "This is what matters, but it is unspeakable, untranslatable. . . ." Mary's "Oh, you don't understand! But you do understand. You only want to know whether I understand. . . ." Surely Mr. Eliot is not trying that laborious pseudo-philosophical plaint of Haupt-

mann ? Or can it be that *Family Reunion* has, conceptually, plunged Mr. Eliot into a sphere where abstract terminology alone can hide his lack of wings, his loose understanding of a world which is alien to his whole being ? No, there is too much chaos here, too imperfect a reasoning to make this play a great one : it does not clarify and bring to expression something which is potential in the rest of us—it fails to comprehend the saving grace of conscience.

Turning from *Family Reunion* to Messrs. Auden and Isherwood in *Journey to War* (Faber), my disappointment is not so great. We have come to expect a largeness of mind from Mr. Eliot, whereas Mr. Auden and Mr. Isherwood deal out no important, comprehensive, olympian views. In this book, which deals with adventures in China, Mr. Isherwood easily outwrites Mr. Auden. There are some really brilliant prose touches, and I was deeply interested in Mr. Isherwood's finely balanced picturing of the Chinese Philosophic apprehension of all the miseries of war. Indeed, the prose in this book is as fine wine to Mr. Auden's bitter, indigestible verse. I will admit that Mr. Auden can carve a phrase, colour an idea and even give an incident considerable intellectual depth, but I do object to being regarded as a thought reader. The sonnet sequence, *In Time of War*, is about the worst attempt at copying the Rilke approach I have ever read. There is no life, no movement in the verse, and Mr. Auden's precocious cuddling of the meaning —if there is any meaning—drives me almost mad. He does, however, attain to a degree of poetry in the commentary, but underneath this first piece of vigorous writing I trace, or think I do, the old propaganda which litters so much of that " school." I would say to anyone who is interested—look at the pictures in this book, especially those portraying the misery of war, and then read Mr. Isherwood : Mr. Auden has betrayed his complete lack of understanding, his utter isolation in a world which demands intimacy, warmth, colour and evocativeness.

Danton's Death (Faber) by George Büchner, translated by Stephen Spender and Coronwy Rees, is one of those psychological plays which deal in politics, loose living and any

oddity that might appeal to vice-loving natures. As a portrayal of the characters of Danton and Robespierre the play is extraordinarily subtle, and there is a certain fascination in the movement, but dramatically it is a poor piece of work. Every known stage rule is broken, and I cannot accede to the translators' request to treat the creation as a monumental contribution to life-history. There is no poetry here, the dialogue is stilted and unimaginative, and if there is any tragedy it is that Messrs. Spender and Rees should waste so much valuable time in working on what is obviousiy a mental conceit, a puff of wind in a world already tired of redundancy.

Of the other books I recommend Keith Phillips' *Coronel* (The Favil Press), Professor Adam Fox's admirable paper *Poetry for Pleasure* (Clarendon Press), which I would send, if I had the money, to every living poet, and Amiya Chakravarty's, *The Dynasts and the Post-War Age in Poetry* (Oxford). Here is a book to read and keep.

MacCALLUM SMITH.

POST-WAR

WE never knew the world-wide shuddering
Of guns that throbbed those five long autumns through;
For us the Marne is less than Mafeking,
Gallipoli as old as Waterloo.
And not one face of all the men who died
Has place among our dreams, and not one tear
Can they demand of us, who of their pride
Forged us this heritage of hate and fear.

We who would serve with heart and hand and brain,
And travel far, with all mankind our friend,
And watch the wisdom of the world increase—
We who with faithless eyes have searched in vain
The tortured years for some predestined end—
Little we know of War, but less of Peace.

B. F. PARGITER.

WITHOUT PRECEDENT

SOMETIMES the unforeseen,
The unpredictable,
Springs in the hearts of men,
Bending their ways of error
Again and yet again
Towards the distant right
All unaccountably;
Where we, wellnigh distraught
With eyeless agony,
Unto a brink are brought
Of new perceptive thought,
Of action without precedent,
Into the strengthening clasp
Of fresh newborn idea,
Nearer to binding love
Than wild dismembering fear;
When the far-distant goal
Of suffering humanity
Looms out more clear,
The faint, far, complex music
Of underlying harmonies
Is heard more near,
And what we once thought light
Is darkness grown,
And new fields of life's infinite
Unfold beyond the known.

DAVID FRIDLANDER.

SLACK TIDE

ANGER, pleasure, comfort, scold me,
Only let some interest hold me;
Let me share your pain and love,
Flints below and larks above;
Never let me lukewarm be,
Never let me live to see
Oblivion settling down on me—
A tender fern, long left alone,
May fossilize into a stone.

ROBERTA SHUTTLEWORTH.

A POET'S CREED

I NEVER heard
The voice of God,
Though long I listened,
Long I waited.
God spoke no word to me,
No vision gave
In spite of eager questioning.
God showed me nothing
For all my high surmise,
My faith my will
To know and prove
That man was otherwise
Than falling leaf
And fading flower.

I sought God far and wide.
In Revolution's fire and sword
I sought his pattern
In all-embracing creeds
I sought his end.
In love I sought him
But in love I found him not.
God showed me nothing
Yet that I dared not understand.

In nothing then
I sought not God
Or thought to find him there.
For God was nothing
But a shadow cast
By questing man
Upon eternity.
And drifting like an idle weed
Upon the elemental wave
That ebbs and flows
Obedient to its changeless law
I drowned myself in dreams
Escaping thus that fear of nothing
Wherein was God.

God showed me nothing.
But my eyes were blind
My ears stopped up
My mind bemused
With too much thought.
Cased in with vain conceits
And bitter pride,
God showed me nothing
And I nothing understood.

To nothing then
Unwillingly I came.
And therein found the way
To build anew
On rock
And not on shifting sands
Of lies and dreams.
And like God's earth
I grew content to be.
Content to blossom
Like the flower,
To bear the fruitful burden
Like the tree,
Endure the frost, the blight,
And at the end
To pass content
Into the shadowland
Of yesterday,
Wherein do dwell
All that have been
Since out of nothing
Order came.

No dreams, no hopes,
No vain surmise,
No longings, no escapes.
God showed me nothing
From whence all came

And all must go,
And so
I nothing understand.

O. C. DOUGAN.

THE WORLD THE MOON CREATES

I THINK some wizard of Tibet
Has cast a spell on me,
For that I cannot long forget
The pathways of the sea,
And there's a moon-lit way that yet
Calls to me soundlessly.

Ah! would that I, one summer night
Might fleet across the sea
Far as the charmed horizon, quite
To seek what lands there be.
Or swift and silent as owl's flight
Alight in Arcady.

But this, I only tell in books
For mortals are less kind
And *they* might level curious looks
And whisper of my mind—
Though such should tread in haunted nooks
Faëry they'd never find.

And well as they, the dreamer knows
If one by madness led
Should dare the road where spirit goes
Unsoiled by mortal tread
Swiftly the magic waves would close
Over his impious head.

Yet, none the less, across the foam
There lures strange mystery
O grave and wise ones! from some tome
Will you expound to me—
If realms unreachable are home
What is reality?

M. BROADHEAD EVANS.

THEIR PRAYERS UPRISE

OUT of the dawn and out of the dusking smoke,
Out of the mist, the shadows without revoke,
Out of the hard and out of the hoarding land
Their prayers uprise:

Almighty Father, we are the unemployed,
Give us the bread of self-respect.
We are the angels fallen from worldly grace,
Yet save us in thy world a place,
O Lord,
And lend us hope to resurrect.

II

Out of the dark and out of the dancing lights,
Out of the squandering streets, the chimneyed heights,
Out of the wheel and out of the warehouse land
Their prayers uprise:

Almighty Father, we are the unemployed,
Grant us thy dole of Godliness.
We were the children, born of a chosen seed,
Yet find no saviour in our need,
O Lord,
To lead us from the wilderness.

III

Out of the days and out of the dusking years,
Out of the smiles unwresting the clutch of cares,
Out of the irk and out of the urchin land
Their prayers uprise:

Almighty Father, we are the unemployed,
Lend us thy strength which are the least.
Long have we suffered, gathering a mete of crumbs,
Yet save us till thy judgment comes,
O Lord,
Till we that hunger now, shall feast,
O Lord,
Till we, the unemployed, shall feast!

A MAKER OF KEYS

SWALLOW SONG

FLYING in sun-splashed ways,
Beating wings spread,
We sang of summer days . . .
Summer is dead.
Long hours of dappled praise
Leave in their stead
Trees to light funeral blaze,
Rust, brown and red.
Even while autumn stays,
Moss garlanded,
Watching the reapers raze
Harvest's gold spread,
Stiller than bell-less sleighs,
Winter's soft tread
Drops on the leaf-strewn ways . . .
Therefore, we fled.

JOYCE T. ROWE.

A HALT IN THE DESERT

TO tarry here is all in vain,
Speed on and on, thou scorching train,
And seek the land of smiling rain.

For dry and parched is all this land
Of blazing rock and choking sand,
That human eye nor foot can stand.

Here men bestow but little thought
On things for ever keenly sought,
Yet hardly sold though dearly bought,

On fame and wealth and grasping power,
On Fortune's smile and fairest dower,
On Grecian urn and ivory tower.

What they desire last and first
Is water cool to slake the thirst,
To soothe the brain and lay the dust.

I thought of Madrid and her plain,
Of brother by brother hacked and slain,
And Spain's inferno of death and pain.

Despair then seized my mind. "But No!"
My heart declared, "It can't be so!"
The stream of freedom still doth flow
Through desert sand though deep below,
And out of this barren waste of strife
It will fight its way to hope and life.

A. V. RAO.

Lucknow.

WARNING

CLAIM not the Sun for father; go not near
To feed on Beauty's grace,
But keep her dear and distant.
Her bright face
Smiles with unearthly glow
From here below,
But mount to her secret room
And all is luminous litter
In chaotic gloom.
Her eye that's gentle in the greening air
Grows near, too near, pale with a serpent's stare.
And in her grounds
The Bear prowls nightly
With illumined paws
Beating the empty bounds.
Against her door
Sirius howls with melancholy jaws
Aloft; and lurking in the shade
Where jewelled tiles are laid,
The Crab twirls snapping claws.
Upon the plain tramples the maddened Bull
Of his mate shorn;
Ah! he has caught you on his brazen horn!
Far, far
He has tossed you like a falling star—
Go not where Beauty's dark components are.

BRENDA F. SKENE.

NEW POETRY AT CROSS-PURPOSES

TO-DAY, as one young poet states in his preface, England has far more poets than her publishers know what to do with. One is tempted to hint at the debasing of the currency. On the whole the publishers are remarkably tolerant, if indiscriminate. Here I have a pile of a dozen new books, mostly by " new " poets, of which but three or four deserve a really general reading, which they may or may not get. The chief fault, of course, is over-stylization, both of thought and forms, but by taking them collectively we can see clearly the currents crossing the main streams of contemporary poetry.

The main streams themselves are well-known. That of nineteenth-century romanticism runs on, over the Edwardian rapids, into the shallow wistfulness of a Gibson or Blunden or a Humbert Wolfe (who is guilty of having called poetry " the immortal shorthand of the soul ") or it dives deep into the dark chasms of de la Mare or the late W. B. Yeats. There is the intellectual revulsion of Whitman, Eliot, Millay, Auden and the clever young men, and the more sensuous and intuitive of Baudelaire, Pound, Spender, Dyment and the nostalgic young men.

Meanwhile more subtle developments are unrolling. Any writer with any individual gifts will obviously stand above and aside from the literary history of his form, and before classification can be formed he must be judged entirely on his own merits, and the system made to accomodate him, not he warped to fit a convenient system. It is to their detriment that almost all of these dozen new writers forestall the deforming critic by submitting themselves not merely to a hackneyed form (as frequently a good as a bad thing) but also to some highly conventionalized attitude. Only at moments are flashes of individual thought and idea apparent, and when they come they are more arresting and of greater importance than the rest. It is these moments that I shall try to indicate.

Wade Oliver is not, strictly speaking, a new poet; but he is as yet little-known in England. His second book, *Fantasia* (Mosher Press, 2 dollars), has a maturity that was hinted in *Sky-Rider*. Such poems as " Kalihi " or the title-piece; such diction as:

> The air of the castle court fell dim
> With bugles of elfland soft a-blow,
> Over the walls like a twilight hymn
> A peach tree leaned in a bloom of snow. . . .

show that his conception of poetry is entirely idealogical. He keeps a world of romance and ideal apart for his poetry, which consequently has a fine and careful beauty but never seems to touch solid earth or stimulate our senses. Some of it even is unseemly affectation: " What time the drunken bee has quit the flowers . . ." At the same time Dr.

Oliver is a scientist—his subject bacteriology—and in some of the poems he is bold enough to write on scientific themes, in a manner similar to that of Kenneth Hallowes, on whose work I commented in a recent number. These themes give the poems a grounding of realistic importance and a quality well above the others. For example I recommend the three sonnets on "The Physicist."

Probably no contemporary science has had a greater influence on our literature than that of psychoanalysis. Of the two opposing schools, Freud's postulating sex as the energizing force of mankind, while the opposing thinkers postulate the lust for power, Freud's theory has the greatest popularity, for obvious reasons. Emendatory work of great importance is being carried out on this theory by specialists; but the poets of this age seem entirely uncritical of it, and tend to regard it lock stock and barrel as a base from which to attack the world. The first volume of *Poems and Songs* (Fortune Press, 4s. 6d.) by Gavin Ewart shows this bias of the poet to be as untenable as that which it replaces. It has not even the recommendation of being new: introspection of this kind is no more recent than it is edifying. As he aptly remarks:

> My continual fate
> Is to fly but not migrate.

In fact, his saving grace is a real ability for eliptical summary of himself—he is better when he thus dismisses than when he dwells upon it. The best examples are "No Flowers by Request" and "Days of Contempt" which is a *credo* and *incredo* of a young man to-day which I and several thousand others could endorse, finding—

> Life isn't just exactly love's young dream
> But somehow I get on from day to day.

When we see how stereotyped are the old forms, we realize why these new ones are so set. "Poetry" as popularly envisaged during the Great War was very much like *The Second Flight* (Duckworth, 2s. 6d.), the collected verses of G. J. Shervill. Both his nature pieces and his war poems are well-written, trite and wooden. The naïve faith of his "Our Glorious Dead":

> They nobly fell beneath a foreign sky
> Lest liberty, and all it holds, should die,

is likely to find little credence among the disillusioned generation that acclaims Housman's "Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries." Only officials of His Majesty's Government might find it useful for recruiting posters. There is something in the make-up of most official public men that makes their appreciation of poetry begin and end with this type of verse. Hence perhaps its protracted existence. Not only elder men like the Poet Laureate write it, as might be expected; but even young men like Geoffrey Masefield, the Laureate's cousin. His *I am not Armed* (Duckworth, 3s.) contains a series of elegant literary

exercises. The most successful, the Epitaph on A. E. Housman, has so fine and restrained an elegance that it actually convinces; but there are far too many poems reading:

> Here's one who has known beauty, who has walked
> The livelong day with glory on his face . . .

and other such meaningless insincerity which even an unintellectual poet like Rupert Brooke had the instinct to avoid.

From so unintelligent a convention the revulsion need not entail ability, but only—if put to it—emotion. For instance, M. M. Valle's *Notes, Private* are remarkable rather for their sincerity than their sagacity. He complains:

> I am sick:
> Sick and tired.
> Sick of effeminate manhood,
> Of untrue manners . . .

Under the new American school system, pupils are encouraged to express their ego; Mr. Valle's poem "Power" is an apparent result of this state of mind. This simple revulsion can also be seen in some of the poems in *The White Cry* (Dent, 5s.) by a young New Zealander Douglas Stewart, thus:

> O singing heart turn hawk; turn eagle, lark:
> The air is cold, the dawn strains from night
> And time's gaunt landscape shambles up from dark
> To lie like iron in the harsh white light.

But this volume also transmits a more heartening sound. When ideologies have gone, when hopes of the perfectability of humanity, of society, of personal happiness have been abandoned, comes the period of dejection, but then follows a state of ecstatic desperation; after happiness through trust in the course of life—happiness despite it. The best of this collection is "Hand and Eye," but many of the others give real warmth by conducting it from the joy of the appreciation of things natural.

Wilfred Plumbe in *Kingdom of Earth* (Williams and Norgate, 2s. od.) places a similar reliance on the sources of the *status quo* for his poetic inspiration. "Starting with Johnson" preaches the advisibility of living for the sake of life itself—

> For though Johnson preached the pleasant shibboleth
> of life beyond the grave, he's rotted in the Abbey—
> and cannot ever learn how futile
> and unnecessary was his fear of death.

For—

> Do not expect delight
> to-morrow: only live
> while the day brims over.

He is an out and out " Nature " poet, and some of his moorland pieces are excellent as such; yet he is not fully alive to to-day, he retreats from the mechanized age:

> " Age of machines."—They din
> their dictum at our ears.

In the preface he complains: " The source of poetry has become increasingly urban, or urban in implications. Now this, at a time when mountain, footpath and beechwood are appreciated—at the week-ends, anyhow—as never before, is extremely illogical." To me, on the other hand, it seems that the sad fate of the nature poet is attributable to this very fact. Those who " hike " do not need to read of the joys and serious implications of the countryside which they can see for themselves. Spenser's wood note wild was heard most attentively by the urban courtiers, the bucolic scenes of the Romantics by the town-dwellers of the nineteenth-century factory age.

Life was very precious to Harry FitzGerald. Before he died at the age of twenty-five in April last year, he had shown himself a wide and intelligent reader and a writer of considerable prolixity and distinction. *Thanksgiving* (Cobden-Sanderson, 5s.), the memorial volume containing a selection of his verse, shows how vivid were his interests and what would have been his abilities if matured. As it is, most of the poems are of " young " promise and do not stand the highest test of performance. Some of the lighter pieces are excellent and finished, and always ballasted with a slight weight of seriousness:

> Who loves unloved is half a man.
> Who never loved is but a clod.
> But he who loves and is beloved
> Is not a man at all, but god.

And the book ends with a bitter poem, written when he sensed the inevitable result of his last illness, which seems a first-rate piece of work and a piece of poetic experience of real importance:

> One more year—and then? Oh, then, out, light!
> Or not? Not out? but light, more light?
> Day—brighter—than light—night
> Bursting with a million-carbon glow?
> Still this by me unguessed, untellable . . .
> One spring—the year's first, my last syllable.
> Are the worms hungry then? thirsty the reeds?
> Will my survival mean a dearth of weeds?
> Un-me-manured is the soil untillable?
> God, do you need my blood to make grass grow?

After the tentative promises of these young poets, is the surer indication of Geoffrey Grigson, who can be relied on not to expose himself to the critics until he is thoroughly sure of himself, thus the poems in *Several Observations* (Cresset Press, 5s.) are carefully finished, and their

polished objectivity gives them the pleasing quality of clarity after much turmoil. Of mainly sensory appeal, though evidently supported by no mean intellect, they find an obvious analogy with *Emaux et Camées*. After the mists, the introspection, the vast visions and the despair of the French romantic movement,—the limited painter's perfection of Gautier. After the early twentieth-century movement of enlargement, obscurity and disillusionment in English poetry—Grigson. Yet even the artistic complacancy of

> Complete the natural history of this view :
> The cypress tree is black, and it divides
> The dowdy steamship swimming through the bay.

must to-day be broken, because :

> I ask what time hides behind the poster
> Begging recruits across the broken pane.

and :

> certainly the smoke is most bitter in the nose
> Of the patient travelling now in the train
> to a surgeon.

Meanwhile the quiet, resigned, unfinal contemplations of the æsthete go on in the work of Julian Symons. In *Confession about X* (Fortune Press, 3s. 6d.) he seldom gets outside himself, although :

> This poem I am writing which is a description of myself
> Applies equally to you . . .

When he does his impartiality prevents him from saying anything decisive. He remains cautiously on the edge, occasionally lapped by life, never immersed in it.

> Continually over the edge of what is flat
> Life flicks and is withdrawn, a ragged tongue
> Which the wise value for its vicious tang.

On the other hand, in *The Autumn World* (Fortune Press, 3s. 6d.), D. S. Savage is most decisive. Furthermore, he is disappointed and angry. Dived into the sea, he seems thankful to be out of it again, but rattled by the failure of the experiment :

> A grief of glaciers smashed my summer slowly.

" Prelude II " without doubt " places " the book. Reminiscent of some older, better-known Preludes, it does not get you much further. The line " My flesh is nailed across the sky " is a particularly blatant echo of T.S.E. He seems to have lost much by having thus in anger drawn himself away, for his real *forte* is surely what the painter-detective Trent calls " machine-scape "—

> The incessant murmur of machinery singing smoothly
> makes my head a cave singing with music,
> my eardrums humming tympani. The blur

of delicate metal continually moaning
hangs the day with sound as a silk curtain.

If any generalization can be made on the work of these writers, it is: That it is quite impossible to generalize about "modern" poetry. It is as complex in mood, tone and achievement as any period of art. All that it is safe to say is that on the whole it is too self-conscious. When a young man has decided (usually without the endorsement of the world) that he is a poet, he is in a truly parlous condition. Unless his stance be very firm, he must adopt an attitude, unnaturally tauten his sensitivity, see life through the eyes of no ordinary man. He must be an *âme supérieure*, a chosen vehicle of divine (or profane) inspiration. When the inspiration does not come, and frequently it comes not or little, the result is a most sticky, stagnant neurosis, with possible end in a gas-oven. It is my firm belief that more young poets are driven to despair by their own over-estimation of their powers than by the world's under-estimation. When Matthew Arnold called poetry "criticism of life" he surely meant not a judgement imposed by an aloof poet of Byronic appearance, but an expression of experience—a yearning toward correct orientation—arising directly out of life, even the most blind, perverted, helter-skelter of life. The self-criticism of a patient implied by the temperature on the thermometer, not the unasked comment of the next-door neighbour. J.H.E.

THE MEN THAT DID NOT KNOW

WE that crawl upon the earth and creep in the lower sky
How the World wags little know, and not at all know why;
Suns and moons and nebulae rush ever here and there,
What they mean or what they make we neither know nor care;
Everything is relative, and Space, they say, is round,
And if it all means anything it's a thing we have not found.

Molecules continually are darting to and fro,
Making hills and seas and grass and us in doing so;
Eggs and sperms when kept apart give rise to nothing new,
When they join we cannot say what it is they do;
Something may arise therefrom which breathes for eighty years,
Eats and sleeps and thinks and prays until it disappears.

Our grandfathers knew everything but fifty years ago:
We shall go down to Kingdom Come as the men that did not know.

GEOFFREY DOBBS.

SPOT-FOOT VERSE

3. FLICK-STROKE-FLICK (, — ,)

WE considered, in The Poetry Review of January and March (1939), the merits and the defects of our two types of Two-Time verse as rhythmic expressions of Poetry. In the case of (, —), Flick-Stroke or Iambic, we examined the basis of the rhythms, and we saw how naturally they could fall into step (without crossdraw of Sound and Sense), with our English types of syllabisation and phrasing. We noted that this fateful facility had led to the adoption by our poets of (, —) as the hackney vehicle for the conveyance of all sorts and conditions of Thought and Feeling; also that this fatal facility had resulted in the sterilization of progressive technique, not merely in (, —) but in all other forms to which the infectious slackness spread. We then considered the method of Span-Foot Verse as a disciplinary training to help our young poets towards the development of verse technique in general.

In the case of (— ,) verse, however, we saw that crossdraw of Sound and Sense became inevitable when our vocabulary lost some thousands of its flicks as light endings from their Anglo-Saxon originals, as in hus-es (of a house), nam-um (for names), and replaced them by articles or prepositions, thus thrusting flicks *in front* of the word, and thereby throwing the rhythm off the (— ,) standard on to the (, —) standard, as if from Trochaic to Iambic. The consequence now is that pure (— ,), with a perfect fusion of Sense and Sound, is no longer possible in English for more than a few lines in succession. Nevertheless, as we saw in March, a training in Span-Foot Verse will help to give to any poet the technique for a closer approximation to ideal union of Sense and Sound in (— ,) than would be possible for him otherwise.

In the present article we turn aside from the study of Two-Time Verse to that of Three-Time, of the type (, — ,) Flick-Stroke-Flick, which is similar to the classical Amphibrachic. Of the Five Sisters of Rhythm, this is the beautiful but neglected Cinderella, still waiting for the advent of a Prince among our young poets to rescue her from her long seclusion.

For of the Five Standard Measures of our verse, this (, — ,) has the greatest possibilities of development, with the possible rivalry of (, , —), which we hope to consider in a later article. But (, — ,) has over (, , —) the initial advantage of beginning with a flick and following it with a stroke, as in the popular Two-Time (, —); and this advantage gives a 10 to 1 facility for fusion of Sense with Sound, as compared with those Measures which begin with a stroke, (— ,) and (— , ,). Reference to the articles already mentioned will serve to explain this difference in facility of expression.

Here it will be illuminating to refer to the types of expression given in January for (, —), and to show how all these may by the addition of an extra flick become available for (, — ,). In order to facilitate

comparison we follow here the numbered order of the types given there.

Basic combinations for (, — ,) are as follow :—

1. Article with Noun or Adjective :
   a problem, an orange, the righteous, the harder.
2. Infinitive : to soften, to ponder, to carry, to anger.
3. Auxiliary and verb :
   has visioned, are telling, can question, will sculpture.
4. Preposition with noun or adjective :
   in rivers, at random, for better, with profit.
5. Pronoun (unstressed) and verb :
   she whispers, we gather, who wonder, that matter,
6. Possessive (unstressed) and possessed :
   my village, our longing, their wisdom, your practice.
7. Connective and connected :
   and planets, or any, if likely, but ever.

In addition to others of similar types there are also many polysyllables available, such as :

delightful, desirous, regaining, ascension.

Yet, in spite of such wealth of material and its adaptability for lyrical movement, I cannot find more than a single poem in this measure either in *The Pocket Book of English Poetry*[1] or in *The Century's Poetry*[2]. Such neglect of our beautiful " Cinderella " by our princes of Poesy is astounding ; it provokes us to search for possible reasons, in vocabulary and phrase, in movement, in supine acquiescence in the tyranny of the hackneyed form (, —), or other ?

As for vocabulary and phrase we have just noted that (, — ,) is almost as closely allied to the usage of speech expression as is (, —). As for movement it has both the defect and the charm of hesitation. Then the further question arises : if examples of verse in this measure are so rare, is it possible to use it with advantage ?

Rarely can we find an example of (, — ,) with such a happy fusion of Sound with Sense as in the lines :

O hush thee, my baby, thy sire was a knight,
Thy mother a lady both gentle and bright.

Here the average English ear, accustomed to warping, would probably pass this as perfect, though possibly it might feel that the flick *was* belongs by Sound to " thy sire was," whereas by Sense it groups with " was a knight " ; and a foreign ear would detect *both* as a stroke misplaced as a flick, too long and strong as a four-element[3] sound full of meaning to occupy flick position. But in justice to the beautiful

[1] Except F. Thompson's " To a Snowflake," of which half the lines have the (, — ,) lilt ; and in two of these the Sound keeps " in step " with the Sense.

[2] Except " Old Adam " (Beddoes), in which 5 lines keep the lilt, 3 with the Sense.

[3] *See* " Figuring Quantity," in Chap. II, *Elements of English Verse* (Macmillan).

poetry of the lines it should be understood that we are here noting points of technical construction only.

If we turn to what is perhaps the most famous example of (, — ,) as a " galloping measure," " How they brought the good news from Ghent to Aix," we find a perfect example of fusion in the line :

And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

We find also that there is not another perfect line among the 60.

As similar results await further examination of our (, — ,) poems we are driven to ask three questions :

1. Were our poets unaware of the values of perfect fusion of Sense and Sound ?

2. Did our poets lack the technical training to ensure such fusion ?

3. Is it possible to compose verse in (, — ,) wherein Sense and Sound " keep in step " throughout ?

Questions 1 and 2 are too complex to admit of simple answers ; as for Question 3, I venture to give a number of essays for judgment ; from which our young poets may be able to decide which type of subject is likely to give the best results in (, — ,), allowing for Variations with a frequency that does not ruin either Sense or Sound :

Examples of (, — ,) Verse

(In the following examples each Span-Foot is separated from the others to facilitate study ; and punctuation marks are omitted as being unnecessary.)

CIND'RELLA OF VERSES

Cind'rella	the lightest	of dancers
Demurest	of damsels	divine
With vesture	of gracious	enfolding
With slippers	of fairy	design
Has humblest	pretension	to fortune
In patience	awaiting	her prince
With dainty	alluring	devices
That lovers	of music	convince
Neglected	by scornful	admirers
As poets	who seldom	can scan
She conquers	by merit	of virtue
With Footing	to measure	a Span

Though " Cind'rella " may be summarily dismissed as a fanciful conceit it may nevertheless help to solve the question of the adaptability of (, — ,) for the expression of the lighter kinds of verse. Now let us try if (, — ,) can be used suitably for such widely differing subjects as Births, Marriages, and Deaths, as (, —) has so often been used.

THE INFANT UPWINGING

An Infant	of holy	communion
Is cradled	in racial	desire

But Spirit in blessing the union
Informs it and bids it aspire
And wings it in mystic baptising
Transcending the glamour of earth
To portals of heaven uprising
In token of dowry from birth

THE BRIDAL OF BEAUTY

The Bridal of Beauty and Manhood
is chiming the bells
In union of mystic ovations
with magic of spells
Fulfilment of yearning unquiet
of Venus and Mars
Conjunction in glitter of planets
mid twinkling of stars

And echoes from chorals of breezes
in grasses of spring
And murmurs as streamlets meander
in pinewoods that sing
The fluting of blackbirds at sunrise
responsive to June
The voices of lambkins at Easter
are chiming a rune

The echoes of primal upstirring
with racial design
Maternal devotion to echo
its beauty divine
With striving endeavour of manhood
for sinew and poise
Are reaching to godhead for wisdom
to nurture their joys

Now let us try in contrast a battle scene and a pastoral vision to see if either type of subject can be adequately expressed in the rhythm of (, — ,)

A BATTLE ON CANVAS

The glamour and glory of battle
The gallop of horses afield
The onset of squadrons of heroes
The waving of sabres annealed
The trumpets the neighing the clangour
The fury of reckless career
The ardour of captains and troopers
The shouting the rally the cheer

They thrill us with manhood's adventures
In panting disorder of breath
With colours and echoes of conflict
But only the semblance of DEATH

Now let us place in contrast a simple story from country life and a complex description of some disruptive and reconstructive forces of nature, to judge if the rhythm of (, — ,) will suit either

A DREAMLAND OF LONGING

The swallows are skimming the water
Where ripples are longings bekissed
The minnows are breaking the surface
For treasure the swallows have missed
The willows are drooping their branches
To dally with shadows at ease
The murmur of myriads of winglets
Is scented with honey of bees
in blossoms of trees
As Janet is threading the pathway
With secrets of Nature astir
She rests her a moment of silence
With longings unfathomed ablur
Then sinking in magic of rapture
Where violets have pillowed the bank
She slumbers in breathless prevision
Of dreamland where longings are frank
though leaving a blank . . . . . .

She opened her eyelids in wonder
A marvel could happen her way
For gazing in stillest devotion
Her substance of shadow there lay
with nothing to say

THE BILLOWS ARE POUNDING

The billows are crashing and splashing
in fury of shock
With thunder of pounding resounding
on ramparts of rock
Mid babel of waters unstable
yet mighty as Thor
For storming the earthworks reforming
from wreckage of war

The granites bespoken are broken
for concretes to bind
Where forces of Nature's resources

	constructive	may grind
Exhaustless	of treasures	and measures
	but ruthless	of plan
Dynamic	receptive	conceptive
	reactive	to Man

The question still remains whether or not the lilt of (, — ,) is adequately expressive of " the daily round," the hol'day task.

ON HOL'DAY WITH PAY

The ripples	are ribbing	and plashing
The pebbles	are scrambling	for home
And yonder	the billows	are crashing
With thunder	in flashes	of foam
The desert	of silence	sea-siding
Is thronging	with myriads	of folk
With trippers	and lodgers	colliding
With circus	and sideshow	and moke
The children	with gladness	infective
Will paddle	or scramble	or row
All drawing	in childish	perspective
The Byegone	the Coming	as NOW
The damsels	impatient	of raiment
Are sunning	their beauty	divine
As minims	discover	displayment
Of freedom	in movement	and line
The mothers	are anxious	and smiling
As tensions	eternal	relax
At watching	the visions	beguiling
Of childhood	refilming	its tracks
The widows	have distant	horizons
With haply	a vessel	in sight
With memories	that crowding	bedizens
Of morning	that merges	in night
The knitting	and sewing	and mending
Are solace	to many	a hand
And comfort	to craving	unending
And protest	to doleful	demand
The spinsters	and spinners	of freedom
With coyness	and shyness	on guard
In cloister	of *He*dom	and *She*dom

Are gazing through windows unbarred

The fathers are restive or quiet
As plungers or bankers withal
Uneasy at changes of diet
And longing to wheedle a ball

With always a mighty commotion
At tiding of "Beach-Tea" "At Home"
With thirsting that glasses an ocean
Or pewters a river of foam

Whatever the metrical values of the foregoing examples may be, the student or critic might find guidance for judgment in a comparison of these with any group of others in (, — ,). He may find that when Shakespeare tries this measure :

When icicles hang by the wall,

he slips back into his familiar (, —) in the second line. Other poets slip out of it and back again very frequently, but very few succeed in preserving the lilt throughout. Rarely does a poet begin in another measure and find that some of his best lines have slipped *into* (, — ,), as in "Flodden Field" :

The Flowers of the Forest are weded away.

Occasionally the searcher will come upon perfect lines even judged by the Span-Foot standard ; as from "Boas" :

The summer / is marching / o'er mountain / and plain.

Possibly the following poems might serve as a first group for comparison of achievement with intention :

1. Lament for Flodden — Elliot
2. Our bugles sang truce — Campbell
3. O talk not to me — Byron
4. When he who adores thee — Moore
5. What heart could have thought you — F. Thompson
6. I'm wearing awa' Jean — Lady Nairne
7. Old Adam the Carrion Crow — Beddoes
8. The winter is dead — Boas
9. In slumbers of midnight — Dimond

W. H. Stephens.

A revised edition of the Keats House Handbook, which has just been issued, contains a new introduction by Mr. Edmund Blunden ; new illustrations, particularly the facsimile reproductions of the sonnet "Bright Star" and the letter from Keats to Horace Smith ; and notes on the important additions since the issue of the previous edition,—notably the Shelley letter referred to on page 34 ; the collection of letters from Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats, page 26 (item 73) ; a letter from Keats to his sister Fanny, 1818 ; and other recent gifts.

TO-MORROW

THE bright day fades, the brave sun passes on,
But from its light the eastern heavens borrow
Gleams of the sunset's calm and lovely sorrow
To be a promise when the sun is gone,
A vision of the sunrise of to-morrow.

Even a Summer of unclouded skies
Must feel the shadow of mortality.
Death touches with his frost the hazel tree,
Yet under every leaf that droops and dies
A new leaf springs, proclaiming victory.

But when more cold than any snow He lay,
Than sleep more lonely, the despairing few
Mourned with no hope of Easter dawn, nor knew
That when the birds sang for another day
He would be walking in the morning dew.

PAULINE HUTHWAITE.

FLIGHT OF THREE WILD GEESE

SLOW slow slow the beat of long white wings,
snow snow snow the stream-lined slim necks,
low low low in latent lithe limb lance;
one
two
three
swerve swerve swerve in echo, spool spire rings
curve curve curve in cosmic foam, cloud flecks
verve verve verve, throw wheels in dip dive dance,
stirring
whirring
shirring;
three
two
one
low low low in silent smooth groove glance,
snow snow snow against the scud spume wrecks,
slow slow slow the beat of long white wings;
free
free
free

CON HARVEY.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXXVIII

From time to time a book reaches the editor's table which especially delights the reviewer. Such a book is *This Side of Babylon*, by Professor James E. Warren, Jr. (Banner Press, Atlanta, Georgia), who is a graduate of Emory University, now teaching in the Atlanta Public School system, member of the Poetry Forum and associate editor of *Verse Craft*. This is Professor Warren's first published collection, though he has received recognition in many of the more important magazines and poetry columns. A rich appreciation of colour and form, uniting with a personal energy in the service of poetry and the beauty that poetry finds and celebrates, designate this writer.

The reader travels far over the earth's surface and into the mystic realms of the spirit. Professor Warren sends me an important paragraph in regard to his stand on the writing of poetry:

> " As to my conception of poetry, which you suggested that I write for possible inclusion in the review, I must admit that I am as impotent to define it as anyone else. I cannot doubt that any superficial reader of the ' social-consciousness,' or ' economically aware ' school would immediately brand me as an 'escapist.' I must deny that charge, and I must express my annoyance at any critic or poet of that school who considers that one should be aware only of those conditions of society which involve bread lines, beggars, bombs, and battles. There are sufficient tragedies of our day worthy of attack by all poets deserving the name, but I cannot admire those poets who have descended to childish irritability and railing and who refuse to emerge even occasionally from the mire of their ' social ' fixation. I decline to recognize this attitude as the true test of good poetry in our age. I do not agree that poetry can be so dated. The more I have read, written, and taught poetry, the more I am convinced that it falls mainly into only two groups—good and bad verse. Mr. Alfred Noyes expressed it simply and honestly and broadly when he insisted that there was no old poetry and that there was no new poetry—that there was only poetry. Our ' modern ' poets of the narrow school would do well to study just what the ' escapist ' poet is escaping from.
>
> " All this is too briefly put to fully explain my stand on poetry, but perhaps you feel as I do and understand. English poetry is less afflicted with this narrowness than American, I believe. And I do not wish it to be thought that I do not admire Auden, Lewis, Spender, and others, but I have felt that this is too much one corner of our world."

One revels with Professor Warren in remembrance of Babylon, Carthage, and Tyre, Atlantis and Troy. But a recollection that brings us nearer home follows in " Sonnet at 1:00 A.M. ":

> We have been out beneath the ancient sky,
> Out in the sweet midnight where stars are warm,

As men have strolled together arm in arm
A million years. And, as we said good-bye
To our kind hosts as other men have cried
Their dim farewells on other nights, there stirred
The winds of memory: I thought I heard
The door to some three centuries swing wide:

I felt the glow of guttering candles spill
On us. A score of voices shouted, "Hark,
Ye lads, no wenches on the way" . . . and . . . "Ben,
Remember . . . at the Mermaid . . . you and Will . . ."
—The door slammed shut—We laughed together . . . then
Turned slowly homeward through the London dark.

Love and Death, and the eternal pursuit of beauty, are subjects for the poet. Professor Warren has combined the first two in the following sonnet: "Death Is The Dream"—

Death is the day I cannot see your face,
Nor take your arm, nor walk along with you,
Nor ever, looking in your eyes, may trace
The little warm emotions passing through.
Death is the loneliness of your lost touch
In all the places of our dearest speaking.
It is the prophecy of losing much
In flesh's comfort and in music's seeking.

Death is the dream of how we stood and talked
On much-loved corners of remembered streets
Or some park angle where I often walked.
And death will be the verse that gently treats
Of how sleep came at last with cool caress
And smoothed our hearts into forgetfulness.

Professor Warren speaks of his pleasure in joining THE POETRY SOCIETY,—he had the privilege of spending last summer in England and grew to love it. "Perhaps, this is obvious, he says, from the last few poems in my book. It will be pleasant for me to affiliate myself with things English again."

Sister Madeleva's new book, *Gates and Other Poems* has been issued by the Macmillan Co. The work of this poet is becoming increasingly known and loved. She is one of the best known Catholic poets and holds the position of Vice-President of the Catholic Poetry Society of America, and is a member of The Poetry Society. Resorting to no use of unusual words or modernistic terms, this poet creates her picture, both the physical picture and psychic picture. The first poem in this picture, "Gates," is so quietly done that the reader scarcely realizes the journey before he finds himself in Jerusalem:

The oranges at Jaffa gate
Are heaped in hills; men sell and buy
Or sit and watch the twisted road
Or David's tower against the sky.

The Golden Gate is walled with stone.
No king can pass nor prophet see
The valley of Jehosophat,
The olives of Gethsemane.

St. Stephen's is a quiet gate,
A simple door that lets in dawn.
Its hill, its walls, its ancient stones,
What strange things they have looked upon!

Asses, belabored, stumble past;
Traffickers clamor; priests debate;
A child begs alms; a blind man gropes
To sunshine at Damascus gate.

The world has narrow gates and wide;
Men seek their loves through all of them
And I have come here, seeking mine,
Jerusalem, Jerusalem!

A last stanza of "The Shopper" before we leave this holy land follows:

A house of bread is Bethlehem
And though I came from far
I did not shop in Bethlehem
Except to buy a bar
Of sunset over Bethlehem
And the first evening star.

The New Testament bound in olive-wood this shopper purchased in Bethlehem, and it is amazing to note how few are the words that even the most optimistic record that Jesus spoke. They are in red in this beautiful little book. We travel on in this slender volume to Suez Canal at sunset:

Two long, low, level banks of sand and a long, low sky;
On a strong, straight leash of water a thoroughbred boat goes by.
Far to the south a single cluster of palm trees lifts itself like a cry.
Across the long, low, shifting levels and hills of sand comes no reply.
The light in the west that was gold and rose is dead now. I watched
it die.

I have received a very interesting letter from Sister Madeleva:

"When I become sceptical about contemporary poetry, I look

to your department in THE POETRY REVIEW and am reassured. Vision has not entirely failed us yet.

"In these days of easy and excessive expression, immature, premature, erratic, the poet can well wish to hold his peace. There is little that he can say in the ambiguous idiom of our time. There is little that he can sing in prevailing discords and insincerities. He, of all our generation, is charged with the duty of 'thinking in his heart.' This service can avert desolation. Meanwhile there is this to reassure us. Our greatest poetry has come from ages not unlike our own. I think at the moment of Francis of Assisi prostrate outside Jerusalem, of Dante fighting fiercely the partisan and international feuds of Florence, of Chaucer at sixteen on the fields of France, of Milton and his twenty dreary years of pamphleteering, and on down to the last twenty years. The problems of content, of significance, and of adequate idiom are simply stupendous, but they are not overwhelming. Presently out of these unhappy times song will come; great song it must be, with the burden of truth that can amount to apocalypse."

The expressive and talented writer of *The Awakened Heart*, by Carlota (G. P. Putnams Sons), has found publication and appreciation for her poetry in Paris, in 1931, in London, 1932, in Munich, 1933, Montreal, 1938. She also appears in the current issue (12) of *Poetry of Today*. We are happy that her fifth volume appears under American auspices. The subjects finding their way to the printed page deal with the writer's own English background and sentiment, and Canada, and the volume closes with pictures of New York City, lines to America, skyscrapers, Fifth Avenue, where she is visiting for the first time, ending with a poem on San Francisco which the author has recently visited also.

We pause to give you an arresting account of how little even the best doctors can do for heartbreak, "The Cure":

Doctors of all the world, what can you do
To heal the wounds that fester in the heart?
Can you drug bitter memory to sleep,
Or bid the aching void of grief depart?
What can you do to dull the angry hurt
Of cruel words, that echo in the ears,
Or soothe the deep distress of vain regrets,
The frantic interchange of hopes and fears?

Doctors of all the world! you cannot help
With all your science, all your drugs. It's vain.
There is no cure for sickness of the heart,
Which as a cancer's ever growing pain
Gnaws at the ravaged soul with grey despair,

Growing with every hour, with every breath—
Doctors of all the world! one cure alone
Can bring the sufferer peace, and that is death.

Quoting from "Lines To America," we give the second stanza and the fourth:

. . . . .
This great new world, this vivid, vital land,
Where like young saplings, splendid youth can rise
Untrammelled, free from over-hanging trees,
Straight as your mighty turrets, to the skies.
. . . . .
Whilst in your hands and Britain's, surely lies
A sacred trust for all the years to be
That men of every race and creed may have
The right to justice and to liberty.

A vivid picture of New York City opens with:

As deep cut gorges through gigantic walls
Your streets go North and South, and East and West,
Worn by the torrent of humanity
That sweeps upon its way and knows no rest.

and closes with:

Sometimes a shaft of sunlight here and there
Transforms the sombre grey to shimmering gold
Changing these modern unromantic piles
To castles, as in fairy tales of old.

The warmth, colour, sincerity and talent showing in these poems will win for Carlota's new book many friends.

Asked for an expression on poetry, we give this poet's reactions:

"Often have I been asked why I write poetry, and feel that the true answer is that it happens to be my natural medium of expression, just as singing or dancing may be to another. To my way of thinking, poetry should only be attempted when it comes naturally; that is, when the writer has a "song to sing." In these days of new forms of expression, no doubt I shall be dubbed behind the times in saying that the first essentials in poetry are that it be understandable, simple and rhythmic, that the message it is intended to convey may evoke some picture or touch some cord or memory, happy or sad, beautiful or terrible, in the heart and mind of the reader. Beauty in all things should be in the fundamental construction independent of decoration."

Between the covers of *New England Dusk*, (The Poets Press, New York, N.Y.) Katharine Brown Burt has captured for others to enjoy the unique beauty of New England. We would know little of past beauty had it not been for the poets. To those who have been fortunate enough to travel far and wide, following the trails the poets have

blazed, we know the value of such records. The beauty of England has been so ably pictured for all time through her poets. Here in America—where we are so young—we have not as yet this largesse, but it is on its way. Together with the many beauties of America we have a recent and exciting history of conquest of a whole country, of an empire indeed of nature's perfections.

It is good to remember that, when I was invited to go with a party of pleasant people around the world, we started in my brother-in-law's private car across this great country, sailing from Vancouver we made the circuit. The trip home caused all the wonders we had seen to fade in the excitement of the journey—the roughest trip the *Majestic* had ever listed. The genius of our worthy captain brought us through enormous mountains of water on that valiant ship. And, it was not until a fortnight later that we began to recall the glories of the old world. We are grateful to Mrs. Burt that she has recorded the charms and lasting values of New England.

She also sends us an interesting consideration of poetry :

" Lyric poetry, to my mind, is not only the loveliest of all poetry, but the most likely to endure, both because of its innate beauty and because it sings its way into the hearts and minds of men. I do not feel that the middle ground, that which lies between the archaic and the extremely experimental, has yet been cultivated to its capacity. The majesty of fine and appealing technique, well adjusted to modern needs and standards, is as ever sufficiently scarce. In this conviction, and especially in the matter of the status of the various tenets of experimentalism, I find the masterly article of MacCallum Smith in the January-February issue of Poetry Review on *The Poetic Value of Modernism* immensely fortifying.

" So excellent a body of lyric poetry still emerges from the welter of the experimental and the amateur that the poet welcomes definite focus for his work, that he may say freshly something that has not already been said, and often better said. In assembling the material for *New England Dusk* my special incentive has been a desire to interpret and preserve in poetic form the individuality of the rugged hill country about the mouth of the Connecticut River, long familiar and loved. But the inspirations of poetic expression are not to be tethered to a matter of locality or to particular phases of nature beyond the matter of general pattern and underlying motif.

" The poet of to-day holds a more vital rôle within his grasp than has ever been within his privilege so entirely,—that of sharing in effective measure the urge of thinking people to speed the day of human friendship, understanding and co-operation. His art becomes an increasingly potent weapon in the age-long fight for brotherhood.

" In the publishing of a book of poems, it is both grateful and significant to find that the letters from known and unknown readers come from the workers of life, often those whose educational opportunities have been necessarily limited. Their eager interest in poetry, when it

is held down to the level of normal rhythmic appeal, (and I do not mean by that, over-popularized,) stresses the power and influence resting in the hands of to-day's poets. It indicates how definite a guidance thoughtfully directed work may exercise in our immediate struggle for sanity of outlook and balance of action. Poetry, in these seething discontented times becomes an active weapon for the crusaders of peace on earth—both overtly and through subtle channels."

Mexican Vignettes, by Clarissa W. Collins, author of *Leaves and Mosaics* (Snellgrow Publications, New York), carries you into the sunshine and colour of Mexico. It is not unusual to find talent has more than one avenue of expression. This book gives us brilliant sketches created by this poet accompanying her vivid lyrics.

The Boston Public Library describes it as one of the first books of the year and the Pan-American Union of Washington, D.C., tells Miss Collins: "You have caught the beauty of Mexico with so much between the lines. *Mexican Vignettes* gave me nostalgia for that strange and lovely land." At this writing, Mexico is in the forefront of one's mind. The question of oil is uppermost. However one may stand, pro or con, in relation to ousted oil firms and legal battles, Mexico loses none of its lure.

"Taxco" accompanies an arresting "black and white" of domes and turrets with spears of the pineapples in the foreground:

Summer will always stay with you
Leaving her gay soul on each patio wall;
Your by-ways are bewitching ladders to pursue,
Joy walks across your plaza with a laughing dare;
Your days are all fiesta,
Forgotten work, forgotten care!
I fear when north of the Rio Grande I will wonder
If you were really there,
If all your shelves of houses
Have not vanished into air!

Miss Collins informally gives us a record of her wanderings in this land of sunshine, not only in her sketches and lyrics, but also notes from her diary ending with:

"Farewell, beautiful land of transition between North and Central America, you will always be to me a shining link in the arresting necklace of the New World! Again Viva Mexico!"

In response to my query about poetry, Miss Collins says: "All the arts are so closely related, so fascinating and absorbing and necessary for emotional escape, yet to me poetry is the supreme safety valve when life becomes too complex, too full of beauty, too full of sorrow."

The history of the author (Richard P. Leahy) of *Solitude and Mystery* and *Father Damien* (G. P. Putnam's Sons) is arresting, and brings

us further evidence that it is often by long and intricate journeying the writer emerges :

> " Richard Leahy's interests are widely diversified and his activities have covered a great area. After graduating from Heidelberg he spent considerable time wandering about Europe in a desultory manner delving into its romance and literature. He then studied law for a short time and afterwards drifted into business in Chicago as realtor and realty-speculator. This led him into the manufacturing business in Mobile, Alabama, and eventually Havana also, where he obtained the largest concession ever given in Cuba. At the time, *El Mundo*, Havana's leading newspaper, estimated the value of this concession at between ten and twelve millions of dollars ; but it was soon swept away by the Gomez Revolution. Since then his principal interest has centred in poetry, realty and the theatre. Most of his time has been spent in Bay City, Michigan, where a number of his plays were written and first produced."

The dedication in the first volume bespeaks a man who has enjoyed life's experience : " *To All Those Who Feel A Deep Thrill In Life And Its Sublime Poetry.*"

The fourth stanza in the first poem gives us this poet's argument :

> Why waste the moment we're allotted here
> Like wolves that cavil o'er a stricken deer,
> Like parrots talking merely to be heard,
> Without the slightest meaning to their word,
> Or like the worm that crawls upon the earth
> Unconscious all of life's great scope and worth ;

and the fifth stanza :

> When we might stroll upon some height sublime—
> Some cliff that beetles o'er the verge of time,
> And there with surges rising from below,
> And billows breaking into clouds of snow,
> Enchanted muse upon that boundless sea
> Whose waves chime music from eternity.

Continuing in the same vein : * * *

> Invention, music, eloquence combined
> To form and blazon forth the poet's mind ;
> Still with all three 'tis generally agreed,
> Romance should ride upon the winged steed ;
> While poetasters with their feet of clay
> Need but to mount a modern dump and bray.

It has always seemed to this writer that a Christmas greeting is the most difficult to write acceptably :

> The art that forms the snowflake and the rose
> Comes from the void with no laborious throes :
> So real affection for the ones we love

On Yuletide is wafted from above,—
Nature's own art, without compulsion's strain,
It leaves the heart, electrifies the brain,
A vital message flashing through the air,
To greet the object of its import there.

In the volume entitled *Father Damien and Other Poems* the poet calls us to remember the tragedy of those who are condemned to the Leper's colony and brings to our mind the bravery and Christianity of Father Damien with his own death of the same dread disease. Further in this volume we meet a short statement about poetry and drama, pertinent to both :

The dramatist without poetic fire
May plod along but never can inspire
And poetry without dramatic power
Will never last, though it may have its hour.

Imagination and inventive skill
Inspired by nature's moods and deepest thrill
In both are paramount ; no mortal pen
Can portray either 'til they live within.

A word about the author of *Strange Sweet Madness,* Marguerite E. Rosebery—(Henry Harrison, New York)—a first collection of poems : Mrs. Rosebery is President of the Kentucky Branch of the National League of American Pen Women, and a member of the Metropolitan Opera Guild. Born on a plantation near Natchez, Mississippi, she studied music under Joseph Gahm, a pupil of Tchaikowsky, in Leipzig. This author makes her home in Louisville at the present, belonging to all the prominent clubs and is corresponding secretary and publicity chairman of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and State Chairman for the Radio Commission, etc. Her genre is quickly recognized in the first charming lyric, which gives title to the book :

There is a strange sweet madness
That will not let me go.
It haunts me in the rose's breath
And in the winds that blow.

It makes my life an ecstasy.
An agony, a pain.
But I am inarticulate
To sing its lyric strain.

Its passion colours all my days
Until I have grown fay—
What is this strange sweet madness
That haunts me night and day ?

Following is " Seeking "—

I have walked through the cold white marble halls
Of intellectual light;
But everywhere the farthest stair
Led to abysmal night.

And now I grope for a spirit world
In the light of my own soul's flame;
And I climb and climb through realms of time
Till space has lost its name.

Mrs. Rosebery gives us the following definition of Poetry:

" Poetry is the ceaseless groping of the soul to interpret and reinterpret the world for us—the effort to recapture in the delicate net of impassioned rhythmic language the beauty, the rapture, the breathless quality of some experience that has touched us deeply. It is the magic that makes the evanescent everlasting; that preserves for us in all its pristine freshness the way we looked at life when emotion made our hearts impressionable—when we seemed to divine life's innermost meaning. It is the way of glorifying the commonplace things of our daily living, of helping us to incorporate into our lives our bitter experiences—to become finer because of them. All the beauty and the terror of earthly existence, the flowering and the decay—that is the stuff of which poetry is made. Only through poetry and music—which is really a part of poetry—can we escape for a moment into regions of divine beauty and peace for which we all yearn.

" This, perhaps, is my reason for writing poetry—this restless search for beauty—this groping for the elusive, intangible loveliness of life that comes and is gone like a haunting perfume, like the liquid song of the thrush on the evening air. I feel sometimes a very deep need of these breathless lifts into the atmosphere of feeling—of these momentary glimpses of unguessed strength and power and goodness to help me onward. Then, like James Stevens, I cry:

" Reach up, my wings!
Now broaden into space and carry me
Beyond where any bird that sings
Can get:
Into the utmost sharp tenuity,
The breathing-point, the start, the scarcely stirred
High slenderness where never any bird
Has winged to yet!
The moon peace and star peace and peace
Of chilly sunlight: to the void of space,
The emptiness, the giant curve, the great
Wide-stretching arms wherein the gods embrace
And stars are born and suns. . . ."

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

KALEIDOSCOPE

THIS is as flagrant a hero-worshipping age as any that has ever been,—with this difference, that having thrown overboard tradition and "de-bunked" most of our ancestors, we now worship our contemporaries instead—or at least some of them. The totalitarian states worship presumably their dictators; the democratic states divide themselves up into little groups, each with its contemporary object of adoration, in the various fields of sport, politics, art, music and literature.

Hero-worship, whether of living or dead, is always a danger to clear and critical thought. It is as dangerous from this standpoint to regard Milton as impeccable as it is so to regard Eliot or Pound. It is much better for the critic, in defiance of popular out-cry, to face squarely the fact that not only Milton, but even W. H. Auden or Louis Macneice may at times write a bad line. It is perhaps not too soon to leave the traditional idols alone for a bit, and start debunking some of the contemporary ones.

The mind which has been to some extent freed from this garbage of fashionable and uncritical adulation will discover the more easily and pleasurably that there is a considerable body of good poetry being written to-day—unheralded if not unsung. We have before us to-day several volumes which contain examples of poetry that at least may be classified as good, if not as great—and who can really prophesy of greatness among contemporaries? Let us be content with the good and leave the great to time.

Inner Landscape, by May Sarton (Cresset Press, 5s.), is a book of verse of rare quality, a book of frost and candle-light. There is a delicate and fragile beauty over most of these poems, suggestive of the snow which is mentioned at least seventeen times in the course of these pages. Frost and ice must score an equal number of points. A cold book but a lovely one, lit with the bright but cool radiance of sunlight on snow. One of the most typical of these poems,

> Passion like radium is luminous in essence,
> Sleeps in the day, suffers not, neither knows its joy,
> Until the dark reveals its incandescence,
> Potent and startling as a naked boy,—
> It shines, stripped of all softness, a fierce light,
> Burns love like metal till the white-hot fuel
> Flowers in fireworks through the body's night,
> And in that instant, marvellous and cruel,
> He who has borne this wonder in his breast
> Like radium is luminous, is pure, is blest,

comes clearly under the star, Uranus. The author prays for the gift of "strict form" in her work, and writes a number of sonnets which are formally strict but musically inadequate. The sonnet calls for a stronger music than that of the flute which may be poignant as the author notes, but is not imperious as she suggests. In this respect

the last group, " Encounter in April " is the most successful and in one or two instances (notably numbers 4, 5 and 9) rises to the full tide of the sea of sonnet music.

Wild Swans, by Theodore Nicholl (Duckworth, 3s. 6d.), is the second volume of verse from this poet and marks a great advance on the first collection in respect of depth of thought and feeling, though not in technique. The stream of Mr. Nicholl's verse flows generously and with warmth and a force that is overbearing, like a stream of lava; it is a stream, however, in which all the rocks are not yet fused, as though the upward rush of ideas has been too swift for imagination to melt and blend them all. The presence of loose and unassimilated masses in the conglomerate produces at times a breathless, disjointed effect as though many separate things are being said, instead of one thing made indivisibly of many parts. This, the only defect in a lovely and significant collection, is not apparent in all the poems: " The Leopard," " Yellow Moon " and " Winter " are as closely wrought as poems could be; and the observation of Nature is exact and pointed as shown in the last-mentioned of these three:

Underneath the withered bracken
The warm wild hearts of creatures quicken,
The somnolence of empty skies
Reflected in their staring eyes;
Only the raven's hammering note
Strikes metal air, and frightens the stoat.
The wind in the stony frost-bound hollows
Whistles out ghosts of last year's swallows;
The silver-brushed vixen under the briar
Dreams of the spring, and spring's desire.
The snow's white horse canters over the hills,
The rabbit screams as the lithe stoat kills;
But under the threatening limbs of trees,
The wild warm hearts of creatures freeze.

This is poetry firmly based on the earth, and indeed Mr. Nicholl's poetry is particularly distinguished by its warm love and sympathy with all animate creatures. It is because it has this broad base in actual life that it can rise, as it does in the remarkable poem, "Trinity," to the rare heights of mystical illumination.

The New Road, by Geoffrey Johnson (Williams and Norgate, 2s. 6d.), is the fifth collection of verse from this author. It shows the craftsmanship and true poetic sense we expect from him, and is noteworthy in that every poem in the book has already appeared in such publications as *The Observer*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Spectator*, *John O'London* and *The Listener*—a sufficient testimony in itself to their worth. Mr. Johnson is a master of the glowing phrase—

Dim moth-haunted nights of phlox,
Her eyes were a deer's eyes of mother-of-pearl,

The dazzling berg of sun before him,
The whales of wind charging for joy behind him.

The last lovely line seems somehow descriptive of Mr. Johnson's poetry at its best. Sun and freedom and open air—these and a mastery of words and their music. To instance the latter consider the first verse of Carol:

Even cold-blooded Caiaphas—
So holy the night, so pure the star—
Somewhere is stirred like frozen grass
By a flowering impulse blown from far.
Young, yet the great High Priest to be—
So pure the star, so holy the night—
He dooms no man to the felon's tree,
But roams in a forest of dream, snow-bright.

Swan Songs, by Arthur L. Salmon (Chapman and Hall, 2s. 6d.), is stated by its author to be probably his last volume. We hope not, for he is a natural singer with generally something interesting to say, even if not new or startling. The idea in "New Year" is worth its development, and "Nightfall" has atmosphere and the right pastel colouring. The most effective poem in the book is, perhaps, "The Swan":

O swan, O swimmer,
Gliding serenely,
Quietly, queenly,
In shade and shimmer;
Through sunlit spaces
And shadowed places;
Wraith of the stream
And the moonlight's dream—
Stainless as a maiden's face is,
Pure as the light that lies
Within her eyes;
White as a cloud in April skies.

O snow-white swimmer,
Hiding and dreaming,
Gleaming and gliding
Through shade and glimmer—
O swimmer!

Lastly we come to *Love Songs for Young Lovers*, by Marie C. Stopes (Heinemann, 5s.). This book is adorned on the inside of the jacket with highly commendatory remarks by authorities no less eminent than the Poet-Laureate and Mr. G. Bernard Shaw; to which our reaction is that it is a lamentable thing that eminent men should lend their names to the puffing of inferior work when there is extant a great

deal of better work much more worthy of their interest and attention; further, that these kindly offices are a hindrance rather than a help to the volume they introduce, since a high degree of expectation is aroused in the reader, and this weight of anticipation the book, particularly in the present case, can by no means carry. For we must confess that the best we can say of these Love Songs is that they are innocuous but uninspired. The music is fluent, the thought facile, the images not new; as for instance in "Autumn":

> The hungry teeth of winter tear the wind,
> Night's claws are black with cold,
> The sunset sky is streaked with summer's blood
> Grim winter, over-bold
> Hustles the last remaining rosy flowers
> With sleety showers.
> Rich comfort in the howling night I find
> In love's warm inner flood
> Leaping from heart to heart
> Knitting us two who might have slept apart.

Such phrases as "grim winter" and "sleety showers" are now so worn that they should be taken out of currency back into the Bank and melted down again to new coins.

T. Weston Ramsey.

IMMUTABILITY

HOW strange a thing is life, a span of knowing,
Constant to yearn because the tale's half-told:
Reaping weird harvests from our feeble sowing,
Hoarding base metals, thinking they are gold!
Why should we fret for that beyond our seeing,
Walking the earth with vain and furtive tread?
Beauty is ours, it is around us, freeing
The puzzled mind from that which brings us dread.

So what is beauty when no eyes can see,
No lips to taste a limpid golden wine,
No ear to win entrancing melody,
No fingers with the grasses to entwine?

If loveliness endures within the mind
Where lurks response to every vibrant call,
Shall Death be victor, nothingness to find—
Eternal void to triumph over all?

Authur Lynnford-Smith.

THE NEW ROMANTIC REVIVAL IN FRENCH LITERATURE

EVERYWHERE in English literature there are now signs that the post-war period of "actualism" is nearing its end. There is a growing tendency to a new romanticism, all the richer and stronger, no doubt, for its temporary rest, for during this period of apparent eclipse, the true romantic spirit, deathless and eternal, has been gathering force in the minds of the poets and writers of sincerity, strengthened and stimulated, never enfeebled or intimidated, by the assaults of the so-called realists. France has been somewhat ahead of England in this movement: no period of dryness, obscurity and intellectualism would be likely to endure so long in a country where art is revered, and the sovereignty of human emotions frankly acknowledged, freely acclaimed, and even honoured.

Had this not been so, so acute an observer and student of contemporary literary tendencies as Monsieur Albert Béguin (who is professor of literature at the University of Bâle), would not have undertaken a work of so frankly romantic a nature as his illuminating study of German and French romantic poetry of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the reactions of the poets to the psychology and significance of dreams. Neither has he hesitated to give to his book the title: *L'Âme Romantique et le Rêve* (José Corti, Paris, 1939, 70 frs.). I think there is scarcely one critical writer in England at the present time, despite the growing signs of the romantic renaissance, who would dare to include the words soul, romantic and dream, all in one title, a fact which speaks for itself, all too typical of the customary English horror of "emotional exhibitionism," and provides a clue to the phenomenon of the multitude of neurasthenics haunting our English spas and supporting our palatial nursing-homes. A proper understanding of the emotions, and of poetry as their safe and sane outlet, would do much to produce a healthier nation. Other European countries recognize precisely what England doggedly denies, with the result that the human elements which will not, indeed cannot, take any final denial, search for, and inevitably find, other, indirect, and troublesome forms of escape. Nearly a hundred years ago Browning cried: "Let us be unashamed of soul!" and repeatedly, passionately affirmed that little else but the human soul was worth study. Finally he, like so many other great English poets, elected to live in Italy—a highly significant fact.

Unfortunately there is, up to the present, no English translation of Professor Béguin's invaluable book, but it will be a delight, and an introduction to a new world, to all who can read it in the original. The titles of the various sections of the book reveal its spirit and meaning, for example: *Nature and the Dream*, with the chapter-titles: *The Lighted Candle*, a study of the work of Georg-Christoph Lichtenberg; *The Terrestrial Laybrinth*, a study of Karl-Phillip Moritz, dealing with dream-psychology, the connection between the dream and waking

life. *The Dream, Nature and Re-integration*, with chapters on *The Renaissance Reborn*, the Renaissance and occultism, the poetry of Herder; *Goethe and the Aesthetic Vision, Cosmic Unity*, the soul of the Universe, man as the redeemer of Nature; *The Nocturnal Aspects of Life* (a translation of this chapter appeared in the Spring issue, 1938, of the international literary journal *Transition*) dealing with the psychology of romanticism, poetic vision, ecstasy, the science of the soul, the unconscious, the poetic significance of dreams; in Book III *The Metaphysics of Dreams*, a study of the work of the Swiss writer Ignaz Paul Vital Troxler, dream symbolism in the work of G. H. Schubert, the myth of the unconscious, etc., and in Book IV, *The Dream and Poetry*, there are studies of Jean Paul, Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, Achim von Arnim (especially interesting by reason of the connection with Goethe) Clemens Brentano, Hoffmann, Hölderlin, and others. The last Book is concerned with the French romantic poets, and concludes with a section on post-war poetry, surrealism, and a final triumphant chapter on *Dreams and the Soul*.

M. Béguin is a passionate lover of poetry, and interprets it as only a passionate lover can. His profound understanding inevitably springs from his love, and in the closing words of his long and beautiful book he defines one of the loveliest functions of poetry:

> La solitude de la poésie et du rêve nous enlève à notre désolante solitude. Du fonds des fonds de la tristesse qui nous avait détournés de la vie s'elève le chant de la plus pure allégresse,

which is another way of expressing praise which once gave deepest joy to a contemporary English poet, for it seemed almost that no richer tribute could be paid: "This is poetry that turns bitter sadness into sweet sadness." Perhaps too little has been thought of poetry as a healing power. Perhaps psycho-therapists should pay more attention to the poets.

DALLAS KENMARE.

HISTORY MADE AND MAKING

The *Choric Plays* of Gordon Bottomley (Constable 6s.) take their themes from old Scottish history. Tragic and tender, the incidents are treated with Mr. Bottomley's sure sense of poetry and of drama. The tragic element is in each case resolved by rescue or forgiveness, it is never left as a futile act of blind destiny. But one of the three is in lighter vein: "The Falconer's Lassie," coming between "Fire at Callart" and "Dunaverty"—the one an aftermath of the Spanish Plague and the other of Argyll's massacre of the Dunaverty garrison—is a happy-ending romance in the reign of James IV.

The graceful and accomplished verse of Millicent Wedmore is once more seen in *Griselda's Friend* (Watts, 2s. 6d.). Her title poem has a curious harmony of past and present time and an unexpected climax.

There are several translations of old French poems, naïvely treated, as is their need, but I find in " The Old Man Speaks " an understanding and sympathy that are of outstanding appeal :

Now that my hairs are scant, and dim mine eyes,
My hand less steady, and my steps more slow,
And women look at me should need arise,
And not because they would, as long ago.

Now as young Averil prove cold or kind,
Why should this poor heart sadden or rejoice ?
Why should the peace of this long-seasoned mind
Lie at the mercy of her eyes and voice ?

Ye gods of pity, equity, and power,
One boon alone I crave. If I must bear
This shrivelled body to my life's last hour,
Give me a shrivelled heart that will not care.

C. A. Renshaw can write movingly of topical events, for they touch her deeply, and are they not history in the making ? *Freeman of the Hills* (Blackwell) includes poems on royal and national happenings, statesmen, and test-matches, and she can write of her own town and countryside with affectionate fervour. Her perspective remains clear and the memorable " dwindling hedgerows " of her earliest volume has an echo in :

Adown the dusty dwindling years
That open on Eternity,
From the fierce heart-ache of old tears,
—Dearest, come and ride with me.

and this is a sonnet on Queen Mary :

In that amazing multitude was none
Who bore herself with fairer queenlier grace,
Or smiled so proudly ; yet for one brief space
What unshared reveries held communion
With her brave soul, when she whose reign was done
Glimpsed for one instant in that hallowed place
His father's in the anointed son's rapt face,
The King her husband in the King her son !

Two years, the climax to three score and ten,
Have brought their joy and pain in brimming measure,
Two bitter griefs between two carnivals ;
But in her face there shines that inward treasure
Of Love that breaks down all dividing walls,
And thrones her in the hearts of common men.

Louise Haworth has the modern's eagerness for new images, often a quick intuition for their aptness and sometimes an indifference to their irrelevance. *Songs of Sleep and Others* (Sherratt and Hughes, 3s. 6d.) are not drowsy lullabies but very vivid if half correlated thoughts. More completed and often charming are the "Others," of which I like "Schoolgirls" the best:

They do not know that they are Spring itself:
Together in a hall, a room. But they are Spring.
You know it from the freshness of their growing.
You know; for they are unaware of anything.

They do not know; they have not any stealth.
But if you ponder they watch, wondering.
And you who know hear birds begin to sing,
Oh sweet, unknowing, from their wondering.

They come and sit with you in all their health.
They look at you as if they could not see
That they are green as if they were a tree,
More green than you for them can ever be.

Many of the poems in *Silver Tree* by Marjorie D. Turner (Favil Press) have appeared in the more homely periodicals as well as *The Sunday Times* and other newspapers. Miss Turner writes simply and naturally, without obscurities, on the moods and sentiments that can be shared by all. "Out of the Heart of Beauty" makes its appeal in such a way:

Out of the heart of beauty
Give me the gift to see
Peace in the star-hung evening,
Hope in the fading tree,
Love in the toiling mother
Lost in another's life;
Give me a dream to carry
Like armour in days of strife.
Out of the heart of beauty
Give me the gift to see
All that is lost and lovely
Waiting afar for me.

Dora O'Brien's *Poems* (Joseph 2s. 6d.) are also gentle and unpretentious in nature. They are rather diffuse perhaps in style, but they were inspired by the themes of her faith—that of Roman catholicism—and she writes of saint and pilgrim and martyr. This is a posthumous volume and therefore a sad one. A co-religionist, Mrs. Eric Bruce, sends us Volume V of her little booklets, called *The Cry of Europe and Other Poems* (1s. 6d.) Though she does not shrink from contem-

plating the present plight of the world, it is refreshing to find also a poem like " Each Morn an Easter Day " set amongst her more sombre reflections.

The study of a language is a fascinating one. Eric Partridge finds great adventure in it also. His gusto is infectious for he makes of grammar a thing more live than the mechanism of an engine, to which he likens it. *The World of Words* (Routledge, 7s. 6d.) is sound, scholarly and entertaining, reminding us of the dictionaries and grammars of " the brothers Fowler," to whom he pays tribute while devoting most of his homage to Jesperson. One passage in the chapter " How Words Begin " is of particular significance to verse writers :

> There is, too, a close and interesting relationship between poetry and primitive words. Although the development of languages has, on the whole, been for the good, yet in one respect the result is less happy : our modern words, apt in abstraction and in precision, are rather colourless ; the old words appealed instantly to the senses, for they were pictorial, eloquent and, in themselves, picturesque. These graphic, concrete words had often to be used figuratively ; in especial, metaphorically. The original metaphors were fresh and vivid. Primitive man was very often forced to speak figuratively : to speak in the language of poetry.

E. D. Bangay.

Reminiscences and biography

The *Reminiscences and Reflections* of Dr. Heber L. Hart (The Bodley Head, 10s. 6d.) are of particular interest to us as the well-informed appreciation of life and letters, of law and politics, of an eminent K.C. who has never allowed the law to absorb his active mind to the exclusion of what many of us would consider more vital interests. We find the reflections as stimulating as the reminiscences are interesting, but our chief concern is with what Mr. Heber Hart says about England's pre-eminence in poetry, and his connections with Swinburne and Theodore Watts-Dunton, who were his neighbours on Putney Hill. Our learned Vice-President is naturally more sympathetic than some commentators towards Watts-Dunton, whom he found " a charming conversationalist," always eager to talk about Swinburne and poetry, as the present reviewer found him to be in the years following the death of Swinburne. It is charmingly told that Swinburne would entertain in his library a sole auditor, a boy of five, " who became the immediate inspirer of many of the verses in which the poet protrays the attractions of childhood. With this boy for his entire audience, Swinburne would habitually read aloud Dickens, Molière (translating as he proceeded), and other standard authors. One could have wished to have had a picture such as Millais might have given us of the poet as

he declaimed to his juvenile auditor curled up snugly in a spacious and comfortable arm-chair. It is pleasing to know that the impression left on the memory of the latter was that of the kindliest and best of men." The substance of a felicitous address on the 250th anniversary of the birth of Cowper celebrated in Middle Temple Hall, close to which the poet was for some time in residence, is another instance of Mr. Hart's intimate acquaintance with English poetry, which we wish The Poetry Society could have utilized in having his eloquent and discriminating direction for special study groups devoted to the works of the greater English poets.

This years' 50th Anniversay of the death of Robert Browning will direct new attention to the permanency of the influence of that great English poet, and will probably place him on a pedestal from which he is not likely to be displaced again. The first revaluation is by Dallas Kenmare—*Browning and Modern Thought* (Williams and Norgate, 6s.)—we would have wished it to be cheaper, for it is a remarkable manual, most sympathetically and constructively written, and should be used as a text-book at this opportune time. Here is no tedious Victorian, no poet of a period, but the prototype of complete, courageous, buoyant humanity, in himself as well as in his work justifying the ways of God with man and the inescapable greatness of his destiny. If we began quoting from this eloquent and penetrative examination of Browning as artist, as the poet of humanity, of love, of art, of nature and of Christianity, we would have to reprint the whole volume. Browning is shown as the great positivist, triumphant over his successors, who, at their best, are negative, uncertain, regretful, frequently hopeless—destroyers and not builders of the human soul. " Browning, thou should'st be living at this hour : England hath need of thee."

It is almost impossible for an obtuse, practical man of the world to review adequately *Bridging Two Worlds*—(Rider, 7s.)—in Vol. 3 of which our old friend and colleague, Wallis Mansford, continues to report his spirit communion with the poets. A sympathetic yet impartial description, in a foreword by Mr. Ernest W. Oaten, editor of *The Two Worlds*, provides a comprehensive introduction to Mr. Mansford's records. Mr. Oaten points out that " the works of Mr. Wallis Mansford strike rather a new note in psychical investigation. It is unusual for an investigator to approach such researches from a literary angle.

" Mr. Mansford is himself a poet, and above all a lover of poetry, and of those who write poetry, and it seems to me the most natural thing in the world that he should attract to himself those of a like type.

" In this volume the author lays before us evidences that voice the claim that he has been in touch with the minds of Shelley, Tennyson, Omar Khayyám, Edward Fitzgerald, Rupert Brooke, Keats, Burns, Wilde, and Moncure Conway, and a careful reading of the book demon-

strates that such claims are based upon evidences which are difficult to explain away.

"It is *always* easier to accept the facts which come within the range of one's own observation than to accept those on the testimony of another person, but Mr. Mansford's recital of them is so natural and so transparently honest that this *must* carry weight with the careful reader. Perhaps, however, the most interesting result of these various communications is the effect they have had on the author's own life. He has taken journeys at the behest of the communicators, which have enabled him to verify statements made, and which incidentally have brought happy associations and made the excursions pleasant and educational.

"It is well known to the student of psychical matters that the great poets have little opportunity to adequately express themselves through unpoetical minds. It would be an impossible task to express one of Shakespeare's plays in Egyptian hieroglyphics, and every investigator knows that one of the chief difficulties in obtaining evidences of the action of discarnate minds is to find the medium through which such personalities can adequately express themselves. It must cause us no surprise therefore that a group of poets have congregated together to express themselves jointly and severally to and through a mind which is attuned, and have appropriately conveyed through various media the keys which open the door of a spiritual companionship.

"Mr. Mansford shows us that though psychical investigation begins with a search concerning the identity of discarnate communicators, it can lead to something far sweeter and more important—a conviction of spiritual companionship across the gulf which men call death. The poet is *always* something of a teacher, something of a prophet, something of a preacher, and the contents of this volume will show that minds like Shelley, Keats, and Rupert Brooke, and others have not ceased their mission when they have been called to function in a large but none-the-less real world."

It is for each reader to find his own value and conviction in M. Mansford's sincere, meticulous testimony.

Poetry *v.* "Modernism"

To the Editor of The Poetry Review

Sir,—I am flattered that my *essai errant* has served the useful purpose of creating a "storm in a teacup" in your esteemed magazine, and although my paper may have left doubts in the minds of Mr. Terence Heywood and Mrs. Dorothy M. Paulin their criticism, however superficial it may be, has left none in mine. They have been frank—dangerously frank. Mr. Heywood has not been "too blunt"; no, he has just been too eager to explain away my suggestion on the possible decline of English poetry by appending to it that banal, that horrid phrase, "sweeping generalization." Really, Mr. Heywood! It must be apparent to anyone "who knows his country's literature

well " and who " has a fairly sound knowledge of the literature of at least three centuries " (to quote Mr. Heywood in *The Fallibility of Critics*) that in England poetry *is* declining into stock-phrases and ineffectual fireworks. Of course I took Day Lewis at his worst because I quoted from his latest volume of poetry and one must expect a poet to be, at least in part, progressive. Instead, Mr. Day Lewis is falling back upon himself just as Mr. Spender and others. And if (mark you I say *if*) we are to accept the Auden-Day Lewis school as representative of modernism and that modernism—the spirit of the Age—is the high-water mark in a plethora of verse-writing we must assess it accordingly and say, " This, then, is English poetry," just as was said when Wordsworth published the *Lyrical Ballads*. I am convinced that English poetry will decline rapidly because that admirable class of versifiers encouraged by THE POETRY REVIEW are more and more imitating the modernists in style and conception. Instead of preserving the traditions of Wordsworth, Milton and Shelley (or any of the classicists) which first marked their work they are falling into the regrettable habit of becoming imitators of a very bad imitation. One always finds the pure stream of poetry in the minors : it is they who preserve the traditional texture : therefore, if the minors give way, however negligibly, to the influence of the experimentalist poetry *must decline*. It is not so in Scotland. One has only to read Souter, Helen Cruickshank, William Jeffrey, Montgomerie and others to realize that Scottish poetry is in the ascendancy. I would draw Mr. Heywood's attention to the peculiar cycle in literature in which poetry in England during certain periods has declined and in Scotland has offloresced. Take England's poetic Goldyn Age and then contrast it with the English plateau.

It is not my habit to judge the value of poetry by its appearance in anthologies. Frederic Prokosch (American, certainly, but English-writing) is a good poet and the *Kenyon Review* betrays a paucity of judgment if it dismisses him on the grounds of " vague romanticisms." And I am happy to know that my opinion of Prokosch has been corroborated by others who are more qualified to dictate their opinions. As for Mr. Whistler, well . . . *The Year's Poetry* is certainly not the best poetry, and I am sure that Mr. Whistler congratulates himself on being omitted from such a dreich collection. My answer to Mr. Heywood's narrow view of poetry is " Read Four Walls—on your knees ! "

And then I come to Mrs. Dorothy M. Paulin. In the first place Mrs. Paulin accuses me of confused thinking ; nay, what she should have said is that I leave too much to the reader. Let me say that I hope Mrs. Paulin knows that there are two types of modernism. The artificial modernism—which is the evading of simplicity of statement—is in the technique (more or less an imitation of Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Baudelaire and, as in Mr. T. S. Eliot, of Laforgue). The true modernism is the spirit of the Age, and it is customary to judge

the quality of that spirit by the depth of consciousness it expresses. Of course, modernism (if we must use the term in the sense of a "school") is representative of England. It mirrors the thinkers, the people who are striving to be the masters of art and not its servants. In the words of Moritz Rosenthal in *Die Zeit* (no matter how long ago it appeared) "tradition is a crutch, you cannot fly with it," and modernism, in the sense of technique, is an Overcoming, an attempt to escape from the Holy Order of affected affectation, an attempt to avoid repetition. Here I seem to be contradicting myself. What I mean to suggest is that traditional pattern and form expressed through the spirit of the Age, or by a man or woman who is susceptible to every physical and mental wind that blows, makes for good poetry, but, if the spirit of the Age is coupled to false mechanics it is bound to be an evasion because there is a sacrifice of precise emotion-experience. Let Mrs. Paulin read Rainer Maria Rilke and then go to Day Lewis and she will assuredly realize the difference between modernism as an expression of the Age and modernism as mechanics.

Mrs. Paulin denies that poetry must express the Age. Let us look at her *The Bouquet*. She lives in the twentieth century and what she writes is an experience in Time—visually, aurally and imaginatively. She is part of present-day civilization and if her "bouquet in words" is not an expression of her "emotional sincerity and intensity of feeling" created by a reaction to things seen and heard, then she is being intellectually dishonest. To express the Age does not mean socialism, communism or any other ism: on the contrary it means the shaping of beauty (or whatever you may like to call it) out of experiences, and as the experient lives with us his or her artistic expression must be of the Age. How can it be otherwise? Poetry does not need to be sociological, but it must have a communal feeling in the true Greek sense.

Again, Mrs. Paulin inclined to be obscure on vital things. "It seems to me that the poet who indulges in too much analysis and theory will ultimately destroy himself," she says. And then, "How, therefore, can one who denies emotion become a poet?" Is it possible that a person who "indulges in too much analysis and theory" can be a poet? If he indulges in analysis and theory he must be evading or curbing emotion, and, therefore, he is no poet. Is that not so?

When I said there were no real poets in England to-day I was dealing with a particular class of modernism, not classes.

Assuredly, poetry to be modern (this word does lead to confusing issues) does not need to be sociological. But, again, I repeat, modernism, apart from technique, is actually present-day reaction to present-day conditions as it was in the time of Wordsworth when he wrote his political verse, as it was in the time of Giovanin Berchet when he wrote his "popular" poems, particularly his *Profughi di Parga* which deals with a fugitive-suicide and in his Troubadour which is a symbolical representation of the exile in the guise of a troubadour. True,

as in a great deal of politico-sociological poetry, there is no great depth of feeling, but

" Un di a lui sull'aure algenti
là lontan, su l'onda baltica,
dell'Italia andò un rumor,
d'oppressori e di frementi,
di speranze e di tormenti,
di tumulti annunziator.

" Ma confuso, ma fugace
fu vuel grido, e ratte-a sperderlo
la parola usci dei re,
che narrò composta in pace
tutt'Italia ai troni immobili
plauier lieta e giurar fé."

is not unlike what is being written by our own political poets. This reminds me that a new volume published by the Hogarth Press, *Poems from Spain*, contains some of the best " popular " poetry I have read for a long time, and proves that fine imaginative work can flower from political hatreds, cruelty and sorrow

I would add for Mr. Heywood's benefit that a critic must have languages if he is to write authoritatively about poetry. Is it possible to understand influences and to do research thoroughly if one is hampered by translations ? And one word more. Mr. T. S. Eliot's later distaste for Shelley does not reveal a limited taste, but an intellectual change due to French and Italian influences. To many Shelley is an adolescent poet and, " When I was a child I . . . but when I became a man. . . ."

I am sorry to disagree with Mr. J. A. Chapman when he says, . . . " the following of the Auden-Day Lewis school is more one that buys but not one to read than one that buys *and* reads." I hope I am not a " parrot-reader " ; I would insist, however, that anyone who follows poetic tendencies *must* buy and *must* read what is published by Mr. Auden and Mr. Day Lewis. There is so much that is good in these writers that it would be an injustice to dismiss every volume that appears as repetitive obscurity, and, for the critic, it would be a dangerous policy to confine himself to the centre of the pool when there may appear near the bank at any moment a good fish.

Of course, I agree with Mr. Chapman that it does not matter what poetry is called to-day so long as it is *poetry*, and I regret, sincerely regret, that the " popular " poetry of a sect is blocking the publication of much admirable work. I would here suggest that The Poetry Society should attempt to raise a Publication Fund so that what is considered good might be published in book form under the Society's auspices. It would mean a great deal of hard work, but it would serve the useful purpose of acting as a dam, and would also tend to

preserve more effectively that tradition of sanity mirrored in much of the poetry being published in THE POETRY REVIEW.

Finally, to people such as Mr. Chapman (God bless them !), " modern " stuff must be a bore because they are of an essentially poetic nature and have no time for intellectual gymnastics, but to me, whose profession is literary criticism in four languages, it is a question of sufferance, and no matter how much it bores me I must dissect and dissect till the very stench of my surgery is nauseous. In any case, the creative members of The Poetry Society can say with honesty, *sol multis partibus est terra maior.*

Yours, etc.,

Glasgow, E.2. MacCALLUM SMITH.

MODERN POETRY DEFINED

Mr. John Pudney, in a recent lecture, asserted that modern poetry, properly speaking, did not exist; the title actually referred to the poetry of this century. Like all that had ever been written, contemporary poetry had a certain unique shape, colour, and quality, which contrasted strongly with the nineties of last century, when Austin Dobson could be writing his *Proverbs in Porcelain*, while thinking people were concerning themselves with Darwinism, industrialism, and the beginnings of the class war. The immediately pre-war period saw the break-up of the academic tradition in poetry, a turning away from verses about roses, or addressed to the poet's mistress's eyebrow, to writing about real things in a way which would make them part of the literature of the time. That transition was only completed after the war. The war poets, Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, came through disillusioned, without any sense of morals or philosophy, but the poets following them, who had missed the war, had produced and were producing what was, with a few exceptions, the most moral poetry written in 300 years. This new sense of morals found expression either in moral integrity or in politics, which accounted for the pinkish condition of modern poetry. The three principal progressive influences poetry had known this century had all come, curiously enough, from right wing sources. First had been T. E. Hulme, a subtle and destructive critic of the old concepts; secondly, T. S. Eliot had finally demolished the poetry about sheep and flowers; and lastly Gerard Manley Hopkins, a Jesuit, had been the master of so tight and complete a style as to form a touchstone for the modern writer. It was not that modern poets did not mention flowers, but that, instead of regarding them only as flowers, they took up what was at once a more general and a more particular attitude than, say, Sir John Squire's selection. A daisy was to them a manifestation of life, to be related to what the poet most cared for in life.

Mr. Pudney was strongly catechized on his ideas on the relation of the modern poet with politics. A poet's interest in his mistress, it was urged, was surely stronger than his sense of politics. Were not

his politics insignificant beside his love? Among replies that he made, he said that poetry had to be written in a living language, and that great poetry belonged to all classes; to seek inspiration away from life was death to poetry.

A later speaker praised Kipling for the clearness and moral strength of his message, and another said that questions of moral integrity were more suited to the poet's attention than the coarser-grained problems of politics.

How Tennyson Read his Poetry

Mr. Charles Tennyson, grandson of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, read selections from his grandfather's works at the fiftieth reading promoted by the Committee for Verse and Prose Recitation. Mr. Tennyson, who is hon. treasurer of the Poetry Society, reminds us that his grandfather was famous as a reader of his own poems. "Melodious Thunder," Lady Ritchie, Thackeray's daughter called it; and D. G. Rossetti described how, when the poet read his poem "Maud," the fiery passages were delivered with a voice and vehemence which he alone of living men could compass, while the softer passages and songs made the tears course down his cheeks. So intensely did Tennyson feel what he was reading that he would generally get hold of a cushion or of the corner of a tablecloth and twist this in his immensely powerful hands. Indeed, there is a story that when he read to the Empress of Russia on board Sir Donald Currie's yacht, the *Pembroke Castle*, he quite unconsciously seized her hand, as she sat next to him, and treated it in the same way. Long ago, when I was a small boy, I dimly remember hearing him recite his beautiful lines on the death of the Duke of Clarence, and the booming of his great voice sounds in my ears to-day. Then I have had the advantage of studying very carefully a number of old phonograph records that he made in the year 1889, when he himself was 80 years old—Thomas Edison sent over some of his people to take records of various famous Englishmen, and the poet spoke a number of his poems on to the old-fashioned wax cylinders.

"Unfortunately, these were not properly looked after, and they have become so worn and damaged that no one has yet succeeded in re-recording them satisfactorily for the modern gramophone, but enough of some of the original records is left to enable one, with careful study, to form a very good idea of the tremendous power and dramatic force of his reading, the amazing range and volume of his voice, and of the curious half chant which he used most effectively and with remarkable flexibility."

A great-grandson of the poet read some of his own poems. Though still in the very early twenties, he is already well known as a contributor to magazines and his verse shows trace of hereditary talent.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

The awards are made to E. B. W. CHAPPELOW (Blackheath); G. S. ODDY (Ryde); CHARLES WOODHOUSE (Haslemere). We welcome Mr. Oddy and Mr. Woodhouse to the list of our Premium winners. Mr. Chappelow has, of course, been successful before. Amongst those "Highly Commended" especial mention must be made of I. SUTHERLAND GROOM and GEOFFREY DOBBS.

HIGHLY COMMENDED:

Enid A. Carter, Hassocks;
Albert E. Dewey, Ealing;
Geoffrey Dobbs, London, W.C.;
Mary Gordon, Kingston;
I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol;
Lettice Haffenden, Shermanbury;
Pauline Huthwaite, Hawksworth;
I. H. Lewis, Leatherhead;
Redcliffe McKie, Hove;
Enid W. Mark, S. Croydon;
E. Curt Peters, Chalfont-St.-Giles;
James Picot, Brisbane;
Marguerite Pollard, Oxford;
T. Pittaway, Frome;
Phoebe Rayner, Rivington;
Brenda F. Skene, London, W.;
Margery Smith, Nottingham;
Arthur Lynnford-Smith, Wanstead;
Gertrude Vallance, Capetown;
A. Doris L. Wilson, Bedford.

COMMENDED:

E. F. Alden, Haddenham;
Vera I. Arlett, Worthing;
Elizabeth Barrett, Seaford;
M. Fancourt Bell, Sevenoaks;
Peri Black, Roedean;
Langford Budville, Worthing;
Ethel Capern, Clifton;
T. E. Casson, Ulverston;
"Cloudrider," Budapest;
Marguerite Edgelow, Gerrard's Cross;
P. Eugenie Emeric, East Sheen;
Reginald C. Eva, Hove;
C. Heaton, Berkhamstead;
Jessie B. Heard, Bristol;
Margaret Lockerbie-Goff, London, N.;
Dulcie Eden Greville, Wakefield;
Elizabeth Kentish, Westerham;
John Lyth, Glaisdale;
G. E. Merrick, Warminster;
C. Morton, Cwmtillery;
Marjorie A. Palmer, London, N.;
Frances Pritchard, Southampton;
Violet Rawnsley, Anacapri;
Edith Hilda Ray, Whitchurch;
Derek B. Reade, Tettenhall;
E. M. Storr, Exmouth;
D. E. C. Tomlin, Scole;
Mabel K. Toovey, Amersham;
Elise Fellows White, New York.

The usual premium offer for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should reach "The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1," by June 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should

be sent.) It is essential that entrants to this competition be members of The Poetry Society or registered subscribers to The Poetry Review, and that each poem bears the name and address of the author.

Christine L. Henderson (Montreal) joins Miss Duncan and Miss Barry in the minor poet's discussion with a description of an incident at the Canadian Authors' Association Meeting at Ottawa: "The Poet's Guerdon"

WE sought a Val Ombrosa, where the shade
Of that sweet singer Lampman, loved to dwell;
And eagerly we sought it, long and well,
O'er bridges, field and fell—a cavalcade!

At length we gathered, matron, man and maid,
Where the full moonlight cast its wizard spell,
And solemnly declaimed (by flashlight's aid)
Our own heart's poems, like a funeral knell. . . .

Faint the dark pine trees wafted their perfume,
And nearby cowbells tinkled wan and drear,
When from the forest's danksome nether gloom
A raucous voice resounded harsh and near:

"What are youse up to? What you doing here?
I have a gun, so git out youse! Now clear!"

Janet Urquhart contributes a Creed:

Atoms may separate,
Each to its sphere may flee,
But nothing can dissolve
That indissoluble me

That was and is and must
For ever after be,
From sphere to universe
Cycling immutably;

From god, through mineral
And grass and flower and tree
And beast and man to god
Complete, from time set free,

A spark of soul, a mote
In sempiternity,
At one with that great breath,
An electricity

Divine, pervading all—
And more than—we can see
With dark and glorious
Impersonality.

Animal lovers will appreciate the brief selection of poignant epitaphs on his dogs written by Captain C. Herbert Smith, of Calne :

To Peggy :

For nine long years did you and I together
With rod or gun in every sort of weather
Share our lot ; God grant, old friend,
That these few years shall not denote the end.

Peace be to you and may you softly lay
In sweet oblivion till that momentous day
And then perchance if such is to us granted
We meet once more for years yet more enchanted.

To Coolie :

God grant old friend some day that I again shall meet you—
So in those Elysian fields wait on until we greet you
Then once again we'll gather in our forces for the chase
And hunt on then for ever through time which knows no space.

To Puppy :

Sleep on, good dog ; we never shall forget thee,
So kind and true so faithful to the end,
Or ever think of thee but to regret thee,
Companion of our sport and generous friend.

One of the most celebrated of Keats's letters—that written to Shelley from Hampstead on August 10th, 1820—has just been deposited on indefinite loan in the British Museum by Lord Abinger. The property in the letter is entailed in the family of Lord Abinger, with which Shelley was connected.

Shelley had invited Keats to Italy. In reply Keats says :

" There is no doubt that an English winter would put an end to me, and do so in a lingering, hateful manner ; therefore I must either voyage, or journey to Italy, as a soldier marches up to a battery. My nerves at present are the worst part of me, yet they feel soothed when I think that, come what extreme may, I shall not be destined to remain in one spot long enough to take a hatred of any four particular bedposts."

The two poets had been corresponding regarding their writings, and Keats says :

" I am glad you take any pleasure in my poor Poem [presumably ' Endymion ']—which I would willingly take the trouble to unwrite, if possible, did I care so much as I have done about Reputation."

He had received as a gift from Shelley a copy of " The Cenci," and comments :

" There is only one part of it I am judge of : the Poetry and dramatic effect, which by many spirits now a days is considered the Mammon. A modern work, it is said, must have a purpose, which may be the God—an artist must serve Mammon—he must have ' self-concentration,' selfishness perhaps.

" You, I am sure, will forgive me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity and be more of an artist, and load every rift of your subject with ore. The thought of such discipline must fall like cold chains upon you, who perhaps never sat with your wings furl'd for six months together."

Keats himself admits that this is " extraordinary talk for the writer of ' Endymion,' whose mind was like a pack of scattered cards." Now he is " pick'd up and sorted to a pip. My imagination is a Monastery and I am its Monk."

An unpublished letter written by Keats was included in the literary documents collected by the late Mr. Rowland Eyles Egerton-Warburton (1804–1891), a poet who amused himself and his friends by writing hunting songs for the Old Tarporley Club meetings.

The letter, though undated, was, according to the postmark on the envelope, written on August 23rd, 1820, about a month before Keats left for Italy. It is addressed to William Haslam, a young solicitor, " a most kind and obliging and constant friend " of Keats, and reads as follows :

Wentworth Place, Wednesday.

My Dear Haslam,—I have been at Mrs. Brawnes above a fortnight for a reason or by an accident I will explain when I am more fit for such things. The purpose of the present not (*sic*) is to tell you that, if I can manage it, I certainly intend going speedily to Rome. I have written to Abbey for some money which he promised to lend me in case George did not remit part of the loan from me. I have written to Brown to ask him to accompany me ; and, in fact, am all but on the Road, as the Physician tells me an english winter would do for me. Now, will you let George and Mrs. Wylie know all this, and there will be so much anxiety taken off my Mind. Mention in your Letter to George that Fanny complains sadly of not hearing from him. I could say much more than this half-sheet would hold, but the oppression I have at the Chest will not suffer my Pen to be long-winded. My Compts to Mrs. H., who, I hope, is well.

Your sincere friend,

John Keats.

P.S.—I have read this note over, and think it goes rather snappish —you will believe I did not intend it. Good-bye.

The letter to Brown (Charles Brown, a retired Russian merchant, and " a generous protector and devoted friend ") mentioned by Keats went astray, and it was Haslam who persuaded Joseph Severn to accompany the poet to Rome. They sailed on September 18th, 1820. The Mr. Abbey referred to in the letter is Mr. Richard Abbey, a tea-planter, under whose authority Keats was withdrawn from school at the completion of his fifteenth year.

At Sotheby's, this unpublished letter from Keats to William Haslam, two pages octavo [August 23rd, 1820], brought £550, and a fine five-page letter from Shelley to Longman (?), 1817, offering " Laon and Cythna," £260. A short letter from Shelley to Leigh Hunt refusing to cash Lord Byron's bills at Leghorn because of the heavy loss entailed by discounts fetched £36. The manuscript of a poem by A. E. Housman, " The Parallelogram," forty-four lines, brought £22; a signed autograph letter from Byron to Dallas giving alternative versions of a couplet in " English Bards," dated 1809, £48; a receipt signed by Thomas Dekker for twenty shillings paid to him for his play, *Truth's Supplication to Candle Light*, 1599, £130; a letter from Evelyn to Pepys, 1694, £44; Goldsmith's receipt for £250 for compiling his Grecian History, 1773, £92; a bootmaker's bill to Sir Philip Sidney for two pairs of pantoufles and two pairs of shoes, 6s. 8d. backed by a note from Sidney asking that it be paid, £35.

* * * * *

THE 30TH BIRTHDAY DINNER of THE POETRY SOCIETY, at the Hans Crescent Hotel, Knightsbridge, was a gratifying, well-attended social event. The President, Lord Kennet, was supported by the Earl and Countess of Cromer, Viscountess Buckmaster, Princess Antoine Bibesco, Brig.-General Sir George Cockerill, Lady Flower, Capt. Harold Goad, Mr. W. W. Gibson, Lady Hodder-Williams, Sir Campbell Mitchell-Cotts, Mrs. Kenneth Grahame, the Presidents of the Kensington and Shortland Centres and other vice-presidents.

The President, in proposing the toast, " Poetry," said they had passed through a year very significant and successful in the work of the Society. It had for its immediate practical object the cultivation of the beautiful art of reading and speaking poetry, and had greatly furthered that object in many practical ways and directions, particularly by the extension of the diction examinations which had been adopted all over the country and been found of inestimable value and encouragement by hundreds of schools and individuals. A matter for regret was the decay of one of the most beautiful arts—light verse. There was not much in the times to prompt the heart to mirth and laughter, but the poets might in their detachment promote a happier state of mind by turning to that art, reviving the pleasure given by Praed whose centenary occurs this year. The President hoped that with the passage of time poetry would again raise its head and observe the things that are eternal and not merely temporal. How sad for poetry as well as for man's destiny if the muse cannot raise its eyes from

the immediate sufferings of humanity. And if there were no poetry there would be no life (applause).

Senator Oliver St. John Gogarty, responding, confined his remarks to an eloquent appreciation of the unique qualities of his friend and colleague, Mr. W. B. Yeats, instancing the extraordinary beauty and felicity of his vowel sounds, as in the second verse of " Innisfree," and describing him as the greatest love poet in our language. A fair test of a poet was his treatment of women : Yeats's women were exalted.

Miss Marjorie Bowen (" George Preedy "), dealt with the poet as novelist and the high value that poetry and a knowledge of its science and technique were to the novelist, acquiring something of the poet's clear penetrating insight into character and emotion and his ability to express himself in simple direct fashion. By reading the older man's work, when looking into the past and turning it into narrative, the historic novelist would draw inexpressible encouragement from the austere heart of poetry.

Lt.-Col. Victor Haddick, D.S.O., responding as a man of action, a leader of Mount Everest and other hazardous expeditions, said the popularity of poetry in one form or stage or another is universal, and was found in the most out-of-the-way places, among the most unlikely people. He illustrated this theme most gallantly and vividly, in racy, witty narrative and recitation, which greatly entertained and charmed the audience.

Miss Martita Hunt, speaking of poetry in the theatre, in a lively individual speech, wished there could be a contemporary poetic drama as a relief to the prevailing realistic cult, with speech as plain, blunt and curt as possible. How exciting if a great dramatist could express our contemporary life in some form of great poetry ! Poetry could raise us to a more intense emotional state of apprehension than any other form of human expression.

Vicountess Buckmaster gave a short recital of unhackneyed poems and Sir Campbell Mitchell-Cotts read a valentine specially written for the occasion by Mrs. Kenneth Graham and some characteristic Scottish poems, the admirably arranged proceedings terminating with a felicitous speech by Mr. Charles Tennyson in proposing the health of the Chairman.

Mr. Somerset Maugham has nominated twenty-five books which are his choice for pleasant and profitable reading. Nineteen of them are published in *Everyman's Library*, but only two are poetry : Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* and Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Among the six titles on Mr. Maugham's list, however, are *The Oxford Book of English Verse* and Gerald Bullett's *English Galaxy of Shorter Poems*.

" One feels that one need not fear for the ' last stand of civilization ' (as some gloomy prophets insist we are faced with) when The Poetry Society remains so active and flourishing," writes a Swindon member when renewing her subscription.

VANDALISM AND POETRY

THE prevailing tendency to belittle the great ideals and famous masters of the past is most regrettable. Even Washington and Lincoln are being defamed. And what is vastly worse their names are being used in a laudatory manner to undo the very things they so nobly fought to accomplish.

In literature this is most prevalent; for in literature as in life (and real literature is the very essence of life) we appreciate most that which is on our own level or sphere of existence. Beyond that all is hazy. No matter what lip service may proclaim, nothing is really great to those who have not greatly lived. To a savage the stars mean very little, a bonfire much. His conception of art is hoops on the body and rings on the nose. From that on up to the great masters there are many gradations ; and each in turn believes his own the best, thereby revealing his status and in a measure ours also. Still we frequently welcome the applause from an inferior person and frown at his lack of appreciation when the reverse would be more complimentary. Average intelligence is the most readily and popularly received, a fact that proves it to be mediocre and still it convinces the recipient that he is a great fellow. Hence his superior attitude towards that which is above and beyond his mental grasp.

However mass appeal has its advantage. By eliminating the static called conceit it helps to penetrate mental fog and thereby acts as a palatably stabilizing public leaven.

As a mild example of all these tendencies we have the following . . . Hugh Sykes Davies (English) finds that the Victorian poet, having something to day, deliberately set out to discover a beautiful way of saying it. Thereby Davies believes he departs from simplicity and sincerity. It is great to have something to say, to say it beautifully and not too sincerely simple.

When one feels something of deep vital importance boiling in his veins it naturally breaks out in the most lucid manner possible, hence deeply emotional metaphoric poetry. Without that urge, which is mystery to those who have not experienced it, poetic metaphorical language of

this calibre, no matter who attempts to use it, is stale and ineffective. In other words no one can write, interpret, or criticize poetry except as he lives it. It is a vital, voluntary product, not an artifice of some cult. It is individualistic, naturally inspired, not a mechanical Coleoptera. Without poetic instinct a metaphor or an emotion as revealing and enduring as truth, as original as a trip through Mars, would likely be meaningless, while such inane substitutes as "Mat's feet over broken glass", or, "As a mad-man shakes a dead geranium",—and "He spreads a veritable epidemic of Eliatitis", (meaning praise) are considered excellent poetic expressions; while "The Night of Stars" is condemned as "one of the debased coins of imagery".

You cannot measure the stars with a yardstick imagination. Hence the new cult in poetry. Like the bubonic plague literary epidemics have frequently broken out and vanished in the past, but genuine literature has always survived.

No matter what their external attainments may be, men never really understand or appreciate that which is beyond their intellectual or emotional sphere of existence. To the futuristic, modernistic mind the great artists and poets of the past are an inferior, obsolete lot, and all that is grand and sublime is supplanted by the commonplace. They prefer a piece of glass cut after their latest fashion to the rarest old gem marred by a fly-speck. And at that their vaunted newness is not at all. The alluring horizon of many a bygone age has degenerated into its own peculiar literary desert with an oasis-like swamp where toads and insects reign supreme. Roaming these sterile sands of existence and mired in a pestilent breeding morass of thought, these mighty intellectual explorers of the trite have demonstrated the magnitude of their genius by discovering a wonderfully inflexible wooden substitute for emotional harmony and original thought. What a marvellous distinction!

You can't reason with Moloch, or a mollusk, nor can you educate or elevate an oyster to an appreciation of poetic eloquence, that is unless you call the futuristic substitute

poetry, and contrary to the belief of modernistic art, novelty is no more originality than the antics of parrots are the traits of genius. Familiar words, appropriate phrases, even though suggestive of things already spoken, may convey originality, while words selected for their newness and mere novelty-seeking phrases may not. Originality does not imitate, consequently wiseacres consider it the least original. Iron-pyrites is mistaken for gold and gold for iron-pyrites. It is not beneath one's dignity to study parrots but why in God's name should men be expected to imitate them?

We are not a demonstrative people; still the deeper emotions are not dead; they merely slumber, and while the poetic spirit sleeps, shall we lay supinely down and let this cult of head-hunters destroy and replace its magnificently vital form with that distorted, soul-less effigy, a composite likeness of their own diminutive proportions?

Has the human race degenerated to a point where it can no longer cope with destructive germs? Must the white flame of a roaring furnace of emotional content give way to the momentary yellow puff of burning tinsel because that impotent thing happens to be the reigning fad? Has literature become so debased that a real poet, born with a superabundance of energy, aflame with the wonders of this life, consumed by an unquenchable fire within him, is expected to suppress the unsuppressible volcanic eruption of his soul to please a cult of surface diggers who cannot understand? Do you think that marvellous thing, a veritable exhibition of the deepest, most profound emotions of the human heart can long be debased before its own shadow?

Specialists may be authoritative in matters of mere knowledge, but no one, not even he who plumbs the depths of life, has a monopoly on the genius of wisdom, and it is found in the humblest walks of life, as often as in the most exalted seats of learning. It is as profoundly thrilling, as new and original to-day as it was a thousand years ago. Without it, knowledge with all its vanity and self-conceit is of little consequence.

A real poet has his own style. It comes with him from

the great beyond—penetrates the tinsel sham of human existence in a lucid manner for those who can see—vocally embodied spiritual greatness by bringing remote invisible reality to view. Poetry is the deepest, biggest, grandest, most beautiful thing on earth!

RICHARD P. LEAHY.

3 A.M.

IS this the place where, some few hours ago,
Brisk laughter sparkled in the firelight's gleam?

Now, when I flood the room with sudden light,
I gaze on the apartment with surprise;
Its aspect is quite changed and different
In abdication of humanity,
While presences half-seen possess the air,
That flit, like shadows, back within the dark.

The empty grate is yawning and, a-sprawl,
The chairs still stretch their limbs and groan and creak,
Relieved of burdens borne willingly,
And all material things show weariness,
As if, exhausted by the work performed,
Forespent and done, they dropped off where they stood
In heavy sleep, untidy and unkempt,
And in disorderly confusion stay.

The clock, alone, is wakeful and alert
With paces steady as a sentinel
Who calls the challenge of the passing hour
Into the silence of oblivion.

In this familiar room, seen in such guise,
I feel as strange as one who should intrude
Unwittingly upon the privacy
And secrets of the silent-working night
And look on sights unlawful to behold,
Where eyes, forbidding and inimical
Are watching me with covert, baleful stare.

Thus, half in fear, do I snap off the light
And quietly, creep up to bed again. ALBERT E. DEWEY.

TRAGEDY AND THE INFINITE: I

"ALL high poetry," says Shelley, "is infinite." There are two ways in which the infinite may be suggested or symbolized; for, by its own nature, it cannot be comprehended or proposed. The one is to speak of infinitude directly. This was the aspiration, and perhaps the success, of Shelley. It was no less the assiduous purpose of Wordsworth's endeavour.

> "Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
> Is with infinitude, and only there,"

he says explicitly in the *Prelude*. And so consistently, throughout the volume of his work, Wordsworth strives to see the common earth, the common operations and affections of men, under the form of eternity. Time stands still to his imagination.

In order to suggest the infinite, to educe for the visual eye "the light that never was, on sea or land," Wordsworth is compelled to resort to a symbolism by which the outward appearances of men and the forms of sky and earth and cloud are brought into approximation, to the end that they may point to an inner and spiritual harmony. Thus in The Leech-gatherer, as Wordsworth himself says, the poet views from the standpoint of infinitude some of the simplest and plainest objects of life. But the more remote and seeming-greater manifestations of the world are no less to him the symbols of the Eternal. So his description of the Alps.

Wordsworth, indeed, did more directly and comprehensively what the later symbolistic school, assuming definitely the very name, have sought to do obliquely and partially. These poets, too, have journeyed toward the Infinite, but by a different path. They have not laid in their poetry the foundations of the world, and raised upon them, detail by inevitable detail, the superstructure. They have sought rather, by some one magic word, to evoke the dream; by one passport, to enter the iridescent portals of the imaginative heaven; by one clear colour, reproduced for a moment on a mortal palette, to paint the perishable glory of the immortal vision. And, before Mallarmé and Wordsworth, was Dante, who, in most definite

and concrete imagery, figured for men the *primum mobile* and the Rose that may not be figured. And the name of his vision has always been—the Divina Commedia, the Divine Comedy.

This, then, is the direct, the positive method of approaching the Infinite—to evoke it, to symbolize it. Of course, with the modern connotation of the word, it is not possible to term it Comedy: only the preservation of the word in regard to Dante saves the application from being grotesque. But it is convenient and apposite to our purpose to have noted it.

The second method of suggesting the Infinite will be at once inferred. This is the negative manner, of Tragedy. Man, indeed, strives after the infinite; but his wings are limed with the soil of finitude. However much in aspiration a god, in occupation and achievement he continues a man. In this compound of fire and clay of which he is wrought, the fire seeks to burn up the clay, and the clay to quench the fire; and both processes provide the material of Tragedy. Indeed, there is more matter in poetry for tragedy than for the direct evocation of the eternal. The poet whose eyes are set towards the infinite has taken for his subject the Unknown, and for his manner the expression of the inexpressible. But the poet whose subject is neither a god nor the habitations of the gods but a figure, of gold, perhaps, and brass and iron, but always mingled with the soil, will find that digging is still provided for the spades of the sons of Adam. There is a sufficient coating of common mould on Earth's ribs yet. There is even enough for a grave and the worms.

It is this insistence and inevitability of the tragic emotions which have made the great tragedies, if not the purest and most exalted, yet certainly the most powerful and intense of the productions of poetry. Death, after all, is the supreme lyrist. He sounds the inmost string. No harper touches, with the same plangent note as he, the most taut and reverberant chord of life. It is Death that gives to desire its most poignant consciousness, in the bitterness of frustration. The lightning of Death, in a flash, illustrates

the dark and waterless ravine in which we walk. The lightning of Death, falling jagged from heaven, shows for a moment the snowy peaks above the storm. And, coming from his throne where he sits beside the immortals, Death, their messenger, binds to his sable car all mortal captives. His sombre pageantry, winding through the glittering appearances of life, leads out to the final plateau whence we may look down and see the forms of men as vapour and hear their cries as ghostly sound. Tragedy vindicates the majesty of the conquering gods; and, by comparison, the agony and the strength of aspiration of man. Man may seek to be as God; but he is not a god.

Here, therefore, is the fundamental characteristic of Tragedy: Man is but man, yet he would be as the gods. But it may be asked, Why, then, are the great tragedies the most impressive of the productions of poetry? Why, on the whole, is Shakespeare more overwhelming than Wordsworth? And, again, a kindred question—though in this case the dramatic form is not present—why are the later books of the *Iliad* generally recognized as more tremendous than anything in the *Odyssey*? Why, in short, is the negative form of approaching the Infinite the more significant? The answer is simple. Man knows himself as he is, but does not know what he would be. Man knows man, but not the gods. His own agony he can feel; but he cannot visualize the calm of the immortal. There are only two ways in which he can approach the unknown. He can plainly confess that it is unknown. And this is, in reality, the method of Wordsworth. Take, in support of this, some of his most famous passages:

> "a dim and *undetermined sense*
> *Of unknown modes of being.*" . . .

> "Blank misgivings of a Creature
> Moving about in worlds *not realized.*"

These passages are, no doubt, conceived at an exceptional height of emotional intensity, and possess a powerful imaginative quality. But it is obvious that poetry cannot, as a whole, be composed of nothing. It cannot even consist

entirely of statements that here is a "something," not otherwise defined. And, in reality, Wordsworth does not, of course, compose his poetry of negation. He brings us, indeed, to the verge of the unknown, and suggests it to us by what terms he can:

> "O'er my thoughts
> There hung a darkness, call it solitude
> Or blank desertion."

But the bulk of his poetry is, from the nature of the case, taken up with the description of the known. His endeavour is to present the conditions in which the inexpressible is suggested.

This is one way of treating of the unknown—to confess its inaccessibility. The other way is to speak of the unknown in terms of the known. And, of this, much the greater part of elevated poetry consists. This method, also, Wordsworth has employed:

> "With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
> Blow through my ear! the sky seemed not a sky
> Of earth—and with what motion moved the clouds!"

But, of course, it *was* a sky of earth, and with an earthly motion the clouds moved. For the sky and the clouds would not *be* clouds, if they were different. Similarly, when we have imaged man's aspiration by saying that he seeks to be a god, we have not really named anything different, in kind, from what man is. The gods are not gods: they are men. This a school platitude, with regard to the deities of classical mythology. The Homeric gods flee screaming from battle. But it is true, also, of all imaginative creation. When Shelley, abandoning the old mythology and seeking to evolve a new, sang the hymeneal of the Earth and Moon, they were a man and a woman. When Wordsworth wrote

> "But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
> Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
> By day, and were a trouble to my dreams."

those forms, so long as they are indeterminate and vague, *appear* to be something other than men. But let Wordsworth have tried to give them a form less inchoate, to find

them body, what would have happened? As they became more definite, they would have become more human. The difficulty lies in speech and thought. Give a mountain thought; and what will it think? It will think what you think. Give a fish speech; and what will it say? What you tell it to say. And, as with the simplest objects of the imagination, so with the most exalted.

> "The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves
> In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,
> Came booming thus."

Yes, but when Keats comes to narrate those words of the Titan, what are they? They are the same sounds ourselves employ. For it is the limitation, though the prerogative, of speech that it is human. Poetry speaks with the tongues of men and angels; but they are one tongue.

In what, then, does the supremacy of Tragedy consist? It consists in the combination of the imaginative effects of both these methods of approaching the Infinite, with a further effect superadded. Tragedy can state that the life of man approaches the unknown; and, in the course of its development, it can figure the unknown in many conceivable images:

> "Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
> To lie in cold obstruction and to rot . . .
> To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
> In thrilling regions of thick-ribbèd ice;
> To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
> And blown with restless violence round about
> The pendent world."[1]

But, greater than all accumulations of known horrors to express the unknown terror, is the fact that drama involves action. We see the tragic hero die—that is, to say, we see him start upon the unknown quest. Tragedy stands at the transition between the finite and the infinite. We cannot see into the void upon whose verge we are. But the breath of night is blown upon our faces. That is the tragic thrill. That no other poetry can give us.

[1] *Measure for Measure* III, i. This, though not a tragedy, is sometimes termed a tragi-comedy, and is always taken to have something of a tragic cast.

Here, then, we have the supremacy of tragedy over those forms of art which figure the infinite under a symbol. That method, too, is indeed a legitimate method. For the imagination is not the slave of logic. The imagination can call up the unknown under the guise of the hierarchy of Olympus; and it can say that those are the divine. It can take the forms of men and exalt them; and then, though they are still men, it can say they are gods. It can figure the unseen as the circles of hell or the Rose of heaven; and then, though these figures are in reality visible and concrete, it can say they are invisible and spiritual. For the imagination can do violence to the reason, and can accept as praiseworthy an illusion. But tragedy, though it may employ the illusions of poetry in the earlier acts of the play, has this one superiority to other poetry, that, when it comes to the climax, it can employ the one stark truth that we possess with regard to the Infinite. Death, the apparitor that opens the unseen portal, is naked. Beside this truth, all symbols are cloudy characters and insubstantial arabesques. But the innate sincerity of men recognizes the innate sincerity of Tragedy.

It is this unerring instinct on the part of common men that has rightly seen in *Hamlet* the type, *per se*, of tragedy. With what is termed the psychology of the prince, with the pathological terms which physicians may apply to his condition, this instinct does not concern itself. And, therefore, all the observations that acute critics have collected with regard to Hamlet, all those subtly significant indications which no one notices till they are pointed out to him, are beside the main issue. The gold of the poet's conception is not to be obtained by sweeping together the gold-dust from the nooks and crannies of the play. The central gold will blaze upon the eye. These results of microscopic toil may be interesting in themselves, as showing the delicacy of the critic's instrument; they may be valuable in themselves, as testing the hidden workmanship of the edifice. But they are not the edifice. Thus it may be convincing to state that Hamlet was stirred to speculation by the disillusionment of his moral idealism consequent on his

learning the shallow nature of his mother; but, in the end, the cause of Hamlet's speculations is subsidiary. It may be comprehensive to construct a hypothetical life and education of Hamlet previous to the play; but, after all, those are not *in* the play. It may be thorough-going to furnish a character of Gertrude, and epigrammatic to state that she "loved to be happy, like a sheep in the sun." But, in the long run, we are not interested in Gertrude, apart from Hamlet, nor desirous of hanging up, on the walls of the imagination, her full-length portrait.

Professor Bradley, in his most subtle and penetrating studies, has diagnosed the mental condition of Hamlet as melancholia. No doubt, he is here deliberately confining himself to a psychological consideration of Hamlet as an individual man, rather than estimating his symbolic and universal significance to the tragic imagination. But, really, we have no need to cut Hamlet, to see if he will bleed: we do not want to know if he is a living man, before admitting him to the tragic gallery, as a poetic man. Such hypercriticisms confuse the issue. The primary issue about Hamlet is the one overwhelming tragic impression. And what is that? It is, that in him we have a man confronted with the Infinite, who, more than other tragic heroes, is vividly conscious to himself of the unknown void that circumscribes human life; who "waxes desperate with imagination," as Horatio says; who is incessantly tormenting his speculation with the contrast between the large and visible known and the immense and incommunicable silence—

> "we fools of nature
> So horridly to shake our disposition
> With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls."

And then, as the coils of the action involve him, speculating "too curiously on the event," he is sucked down towards the unknown; and we actually see this sensitively self-conscious, or world-conscious, imaginer perish, as we say —that is, pass out to probe the certainty of his questionings.

Now this, I challenge your opinion, is the primary, the

evident, the centrally imaginative impression we gain from hearing or reading, *Hamlet*. And it is dubitable whether any one could come upon the following characterization by Bradley for the first time without a thrill of surprise :

> " The Hamlet who, summoned by the Ghost, bursts from his terrified friends with the cry :
>
> ' Unhand me, gentlemen !
>
> By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me ; '
>
> the Hamlet who scarcely once speaks to the King without an insult, or to Polonius without a gibe ; the Hamlet who storms at Ophelia and speaks daggers to his mother ; the Hamlet who, hearing a cry behind the arras, whips out his sword in an instant and runs the eavesdropper through ; the Hamlet who sends his ' school-fellows ' to their death and never troubles his head about them more ; the Hamlet who is the first man to board a pirate ship, and who fights with Laertes in the grave ; the Hamlet of the catastrophe, an omnipotent fate, before whom all the court stands helpless, who as the truth breaks upon him, rushes on the King, drives his foil right through his body, then seizes the poisoned cup and forces it violently between the wretched man's lips, and in the throes of death has force and fire enough to wrest the cup from Horatio's hand (' By heaven, I'll have it ! ') lest he should drink and die. This man, the Hamlet of the play, is a heroic, terrible figure. He would have been formidable to Othello and Macbeth. If the sentimental Hamlet had crossed him, he would have hurled him from his path with one sweep of his arm."

Now, as a collection of facts, all that may be true ; and it is put with great eloquence. But what has it to do with the imaginative impression of the play ? Who ever thought of Hamlet in that way, till he had collected a list of his violences and written them down ? You cannot judge of poetry by a process of induction. And, as a matter of fact, nobody thinks of what Hamlet *does :* it is what he says, that matters. Or rather men think of what he does, but in a very different way from that in which they regard the actions of Othello or Macbeth. It is not true that Hamlet would have been a formidable antagonist to Othello or Macbeth. Physically, he might, according to the list of his proofs of strength, drawn up by Professor Bradley. But organically, he would not. That is, there is not in Hamlet, as he is seen by the imagination, that fusion of spirit and body which is the

heroic strength of Macbeth or Othello. Hamlet's actions are nothing. Nobody in the play knows what he will do. Some think he is mad. Some of his later commentators think he is mad. But why are his actions immaterial to the imagination? Why is he thought to be mad? Because he is distraught: he is distraught with the universe. He is "God-drunken." It is the very irrelevant character of his actions that constitutes their relevance.

Now consider one or two other points. It is said that the revelation of his mother's shallowness is the cause of Hamlet's disillusionment. And, psychologically, that may be true. But, dramatically, it is not at all the determining factor that originates the tragic impression, the tragic atmosphere. The inaugurating event to the imagination is the appearance of the Ghost. Why will the critics leave out, or minimize, what strikes the eye? Why do they seek to put what is not there, or there to a less degree, for what is there, in full measure and overflowing? Now, to resume, what is the imaginative effect of the entry of the Ghost? It is that the earth and the heaven are parted asunder—"Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell." It is that the Unknown is brought near:

> "But that I am forbid
> To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
> I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
> Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood."

Incommensurably more than the brooding upon his mother's character, more in dramatic power, in self-evident appeal to the imagination, is the significance of the Ghost, of the unknown void, in determining the tragic atmosphere, the sense of the strange and inapparent:

> "But tell
> Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
> Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,
> Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,
> Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws
> To cast thee up again."

A second consideration. We have controversies debating whether Hamlet saw a moral sin in the murder of

Claudius which was enjoined on him, or whether he regarded it as the natural act of retribution. That the point admits of dispute, proves its irrelevance. The real point of importance is that Hamlet's thoughts are directed to death, as a condition. The manner of that death, whether moral or immoral, is subsidiary. But that death as an unknown state occupies his speculation, admits of no possible debate. It is thrust upon us at every turn. The horrid appearances of death are the subject of the Player's heroics :

> " Head to foot
> Now is he total gules ; horridly trick'd
> With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons
> Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
> That lend a tyrannous and damnèd light
> To their vile murders."

It is the very subject of what, in other plays, is the humour.

But what is the imaginative purpose of this prying through the loam of the grave, and playing at loggats with the bones ? These are the dice with which Hamlet matches himself with death; and they are grievously loaded on the side of the Unknown. And then there are the great soliloquies.

And once more, there is a third point. It is discussed whether Hamlet was and had been, or was not but had been, or was not and had not been, in love with Ophelia. And again, if he was, should he have been ? Or if he was not, should he not have been ? It is of precisely no importance. It is a sentimental question ; and we may put the answer sentimentally. Hamlet is the mountain peak, looking up to the cold and unquestionable night. And, far down in some gully—you will forgive the platitude—is a flower, drenched no doubt with spray or luminous with moon-lit beauty. And what does it matter ? All that matters is :

> " This eternal blazon must not be
> To ears of flesh and blood " ; . . .

and

> " He has my dying voice ;
> So tell him, with the occurents, more and less,
> Which have solicited. The rest is silence."

I take no shame to say that the " purple patches " are the regal vestures, Tyrian-dyed, if you will, that proclaim the sovran deviser. It is their mere familiarity that constrains to all opposite paradox.

" O ! that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew."

" To die—to sleep,
No more :—and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to."

" To die—to sleep—
To sleep ! perchance to dream."

" Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death
. . . puzzles the will."

" Witness this army, of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd
Makes mouths at the invisible event ;
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell."

If it be—as it is—unphilosophic to say that all else is the arbitrary prologue and the parodos to which this is the play, then let us conclude that these are the very scents on the flowers that proclaim the garden of Mnemosyne, the bubbles winking at the brim that authenticate the nectar of the gods.

T. E. CASSON.

The award of the Hawthornden Prize to Mr. Christopher Hassall for his " Penthesperon " again illustrates the sound judgment and prescience of THE POETRY REVIEW, which anticipated this excellent adjudication by Mr. Ronald Fuller's admirable apprizement of Mr. Hassall's new work in an exceptionally lengthy article worthy of its subject. We similarly anticipated the award of the King's first Gold Medal for Poetry by prior recognition of Mr. Laurence Whistler's new volume and also an appreciation of his poetry in a special article by Mr. Fuller who has proved himself to be most discerning.

THE OLD POET TO THE NEW

IF I speak with the words of him and him,
And the thoughts of men long dead,
Draw happiness from years grown dim,
What is it to you? he said.

And if I look with eyes long dust
On rock and lake and sea,
Is thine eye evil that I am just,
And guard my loyalty?

If I am a seed of ages old
And worship fell and tree,
And drink from goblets of antique gold,
How are you better? said he.

T. E. CASSON.

SUPPLICATION

O HEAVENLY Powers,
If ever looking down, through space and time,
Upon this world of ours,
And seeing every soul, a prisoner
Penned in a narrow cell of flesh and bone,
Enduring a life-sentence all alone,
To expiate some dim primordial crime,
You should feel pity stir,
Oh, do not waste it on the young, whose eyes
Are fixed so avidly upon the stars,
That they are too entranced to realize
They look through prison bars;
Nor on the old—grown-used to duress, they
Can bear the little more that yet remains
To be lived through until the happy day
When death will loose their chains;
But save your pity for those who like me,
With half their sentence served, stand full of fears,
Without youth's dreams or age's apathy,
Before the awful vista of caged years!

E. F. A. GEACH.

LANDSCAPE: FROM A CYCLE OF POEMS FOR MARGUERITE

AND yet we have not met? You tell me so
despite the fullness of you in this heart
subtle with dead fraternities. You know—
as children do—the benedictive part
of fervent words in an unfamiliar place,
that beating, unplumbed moment when
unhastening words become illumining pen
forming each phrase, each pause into a face.
So I have gathered you within my ear—
as farmers their dreams from a handful of seed,—
and this possession means a possibility
that our unmeasured spring, so rich with fear
for the irrevocable, may comprehend
funambulistic tricks of destiny.
O here the landscape shaped by words,
full of a richness like mirrors in rooms,
like measured metrical matter
embalmer of crushed perfumes—
like measured metrical matter.

Who shall destroy—no one but you—
this efflorescing kingdom in my mind,
wrought in the cosmic-space of being,
mounting like a bird, creating from ascension
depths it has left behind?
All day I stand, watching the landscape shaping
as once I stood, watching the season paint
its history on window panes,
permutating a million fancies beyond divination,
O love! O joy! O miracle of creation!

I know you England!

Buttressed heights, deep valleys, wind and rain,
recurring, aye, recurring in the memory of my mother's
actions;

Soft speech and laughter—cool wind and stream,
brown hair and eyes—warm earth and sky,
connoting the inexhaustible mystery of earth invisibly in us.
And so of all my poetry, this the epic *intime*
filled with the thousand and one subtleties
of colour and form, emotion and thought,
filled with your voice's adumbrating mirror
spaciously reflecting two worlds in its language.

And yet, my lusty one, my etherized Presence—
pouring your country into the chalice of hearing—
for the first time I see you rising,
yielding the fruit of distance,
yielding a nation's culture in the intimate word ;
Trees in the forking of tongue winds in the sibilant whisper
O miracle
of nearness in remoteness !

As the lover perceives in the loved one's austere interrogation
centuries of breeding, temperament of country,
so I (*Sit laus plana, sit sonora*) perceive in your vocal offering,
carved in accent, intonation,
the ultimate Motherland.

I praise England !

When, O when, will the portrait be finished ?
Never, I know, for language progresses,
revealing new traits, new strata, new landscape,
like women changing their infinite dresses ;
This England, alone, leaping through skies—
translucent, emergent in the ring of hearing—
can hope to reach that final completement
in the wonder, the fire of retentive eyes.

MACCALLUM SMITH.

This is part of a long poem by Mr. MacCallum Smith, other portions of which may appear in the future. It is based on reaction to a telephone conversation.

GLEN OF DREAMS

(*To Gertrude E. Horn*)

THE country road flings barren miles
In whitened lengths toward distant skies,
No trees are there, no shade beguiles
The speeding traveller's straining eyes;
A travesty indeed it seems
Of June and Summer, when you know
The nearness of that Glen of Dreams
Where we went wandering long ago.
Beyond a dozen fields it lies—
An Irish mile, as the crow flies—
A moment since, half-unaware,
You passed the lane that leads you there,
The wild-rose lane to Paradise.

Turn back! Turn back!
Is life so stern that you should lack
An hour or two to wander there?
To wander there and wonder there
That any place could be so fair
As this small, unspoiled, Irish glen,
This secret place beyond compare
Which heaven, and the fairies, share—
Turn back again!

The grave hills guard it, calm, intense
They brood above its innocence;
Its blissful joy in primal things,
Deep woods, sweet fields and blossomings;
Its stream that over rock and ridge
Foams down beneath the arching bridge
And shouts, as prodigal it flings
White diamonds on silver strings
Aloft, in sunlight glistening,
Singing a loud song without words
To chorus of the happy birds,
And little wild things listening.

Look, then! O, look!
Here Inspiration woke and took
Intangible its earliest shape,
When inarticulate it stirred
And trembled, seeking for escape
From silence to the seen and heard,
The pictured dream, the written word,
That so in symbol it might dress
Unseen essential loveliness.

For there are days when luminous
The veil appears which severs us
From things Divine beyond our sight,
And this was one of the blest days
Translucent, crystal-bright,
When, as of old, God speaks and says—
"Let there be Light"!
One of the days
When by celestial ways
Beauty comes smiling, effortless,
To charm and bless.

One of the days
When the glad Poet finds the perfect phrase;
When the Composer hears
The meaning of the music of the spheres,
Interprets it to comprehending ears,
And all give praise!
One of the days
When the Artist in amaze
Finds all his thwarted efforts past,
And at last
With most intense delight
Like pure flame burning bright,
He sees the concepts of his mind
In sure perfection lined,
Strong and right;
Rapture of colour blending,
Capture of dreams, transcending
In one brief hour imagination's flight.

Yet though the evening shadows soon must grey
The shining hours of Inspiration's day,
Why should the spirit fail and sink forlorn?
The lark must seek the nest she left at morn
On the low ground; an eagle cannot stay
Self-poised above the peak, but must descend
Into the darkness of day's quiet end.
Yet Joy its anthem to the skies has poured,
And Strength and Vision high aloft have soared,
Something of living Beauty has been born—
Achievement cannot sink to earth forlorn!

And so, at close of day
The wild-rose sleeps, and Peace points out the way
Back from the Glen of Dreams, along the lane,
Back to the world again!
But courage meets the barren miles,
The whitened lengths of star-lit road,
For in the distance Beauty smiles,
And all horizons lead to God.

MARGARET E. STRINGER.

MUSIC

MUSIC is a brook in the mind:
It leaps with golden limbs
And sings to itself as well as to me
Its unpredictable hymns.

Music is a tree in the mind:
It glows against the weather;
One hand on loam and one on leaves
Keep earth and heaven together.

Music, which art a brook, a tree,
I dream and I rejoice:
My heart is a flower in the hills,
An ear against thy voice.

OSCAR WILLIAMS.

AUBADE

THE lagging senses dawn
As the dream scene sets ;
Out of a twenty-coloured sky,
Across the shining slates, is drawn
The shriek and lyric of a lark ;
And from the blackset bush,
Too near at hand, a blackbird
Sings out of the dark—
Beads of joy hard to bear
On a string of silence ; the bird,
Invisible as a star is
Inaudible against the night,
Dominates the air . . .
And rarest of the rare,
And for at most a minute,
A cuckoo (never in town by day)
Mocks the clock and the planet
With thirty ragged things to say !

EDWARD LOWBURY.

ALTERNATIVE

THIS prodigal self-growth,
Live branch of flesh,
Prune back, prune back before,
Lost in its mesh,
You writhe in poisonous vines,
Strangled to death.

Yet this bare stump of tree,
Shorn skeleton,
Is but death's scaffolding
To build upon.

Is there no other choice ?
Redeeming feature ?
None, but this only one :
A new creature.

BRENDA F. SKENE.

KAZI NAZARUL ISLAM: REALIST OR IDEALIST?

NAZARUL ISLAM is known in Bengal as the Bidrohi Kavi meaning "The Rebel Poet." The title originated from his having written a poem entitled *Bidrohi* (The Rebel). The poem was perhaps one of his earliest efforts and it turned out to be a strikingly original composition. He is supposed to have risen from his bed in the middle of the night to write this inspired verse, which no doubt more than repaid the trouble he took at that unearthly hour, as its publication brought him instantaneous recognition. It was during the non-co-operation movement that he made his debut as a poet, and the country was in the right type of mood to receive a poem that appeared to be one long stretch of violent mental eruption. A nonchalant enthusiasm, a youthful irreverence and a defiant militant faith to shape one's own destiny are the fundamental characteristics of his writings at that period. He has encumbered the above-mentioned masterpiece with so much passion th. the neat traditional form breaks down, and the poem in its original printed pattern has quite an irregular shape; it reads beautifully well, however, provided the recitation follows the rhythm of ideas that the original passion of the poem dictated. In the poems that followed, especially *Dhum Ketu* (The Comet), he attempted to recapture his original passion but failed to resuscitate the spontaneity of expression, the poetic grace, the natural energy and that vast yet dignified capacity for wrath that characterized *The Rebel*.

In matters of poetic diction and technique he has been influenced by Satyendranath and Karunanidan, both of whom demonstrate an exceptional gift of producing tone poems, even occasionally allowing their instinct for musical words and tone values to overpower them to the extent of virtuosity. Nazarul has not escaped altogether from this weakness to indulge in an orgy of over-precious verbal decoration. While the two elder Hindu poets hunt words that are of Sanskrit origin, Nazarul goes so far as to incorporate appropriate words from Arabic, Persian and

English, and attach them to Bengali poetry, thus inflicting on it an obscurity as well as an alien music.

Much of the so-called best poetry produced during the second decade of the present century when analysed will be found to be mere facile metrical manipulation of diction. Without a conscious creed of " Art for Art's sake," the Bengali poets have displayed an inordinate craving to play with words just for the sake of producing some gracefully artistic and melodious verse. This no doubt to a certain extent appeals to the emotions through its musical effect. But great poetry should satisfy the intellect as well, as it does in the case of Tagore, whose songs are not only exquisitely worded but deeply thoughtful, with an inner meaning that is peculiarly Tagorian. This fundamental brainwork, the hallmark of supreme poets, is not markedly manifest in Nazarul's poems.

Nazarul started his poetic career with a highly-strung emotional nature, and an imagination excitable and fiery to a degree, the like of which can be found to some extent in Kipling, to a greater extent in Henley, and perhaps John Davidson, and in a few of the shouting verses of Vachel Lindsay, and the proletarian pieces of Carl Sandburg ; but it is not to be found in Bengali poetry, which seldom presents itself in the guise of warlike emotion. It is probable that the excitable poets have their pugnacious instinct rather highly developed, although a really scientific explanation will refrain from attributing the trait of excitability to a single instinct only but will take into consideration a multitude of thwarted instincts, repressed emotions and veiled passions, along with the external circumstances, as contributory factors to this artistic expression of an explosive personality. However, except where Nazarul is purely lyrical and the mood behind a poem is of a peaceful sort, his poetic effort is an essential concomitant of the violent emotion of indignation or contempt aroused by the contemplation of the current social and political situation. He writes truthfully, as truth appears to him, from a poet's and not from a politician's or social philosopher's point of view. Phrases like " the whole truth and nothing but the

truth " abound in critical literature, but to be able to give the whole truth about anything whatsoever is not humanly possible. In any case, a poet's truth is not ordinarily measurable by any objective standard but inheres in his emotional and imaginative life, and from this point of view it may safely be said that Nazarul's poetry is as a rule convincingly true to his emotions.

Nazarul is a negative instance of Realism in the sense it has been used to evaluate the realistic poetry of such writers as Masefield or Abercrombie. He does not even display the simpler descriptive realism of the older Bengali poets. But for subjective realism, for true portrayal of emotions, whose intensity is the guarantee of their genuineness, we do not know of any contemporary poet in either literature, English or Bengali, who can surpass him. That is why in his best poems conservative couplets are flung aside and his well-nigh cosmic emotions take the rein of his lines and stanzas and guide them with an inevitability that is nature's own, with a restraint and passion set against each other that the poet truly feels during the process of creation. It is only natural that a high tension in creative energy cannot be maintained at a uniform level all through. When it breaks down, his tone transforms itself into a more subdued key, where it continues to rest for a space of time in order to muster once again force and energy, so that a higher level may be attained. These agreeable variations in the surge of emotional outflow in some of his best poems, such as *Bidrohi* or *Kemal Pasha* or *Pujarini* (Worshipper) are the most noteworthy characteristics of Nazarul's longer pieces. A study of Nazarul's realism is really a study of his emotional life. In his early poetry, thought occupies a subordinate place, and the intellectualization of his emotions is hardly perceptible. In other words, he is entirely guided by feelings and intuitions. He is not a profound thinker, but he shows an enormous capacity to feel deeply and justly and express himself in words chosen with an eerie sense of their musical value. Lastly, his grip on the æsthetic possibilities of Hindu mythology is decidedly better than that of the Hindu poets. This may be on

account of his being a Mohammedan. His attention, unlike that of the Hindus, is not deflected by the underlying religious sentiments of the legends. He handles Hindu mythology at its æsthetic face-value, just as deftly as an able Christian poet may manipulate the Greek or Roman mythologies to enrich his poetry with a subtle æsthetic or philosophic significance. Moreover, his poetry exhibits not only a deep acquaintance with Hindu culture, thought and sentiments, but an equally deep understanding of the Islamic culture and tradition, and a masterly absorption of the technical excellence and verbal magic of his immediate predecessors in the field of Bengali poetry, especially Satyendranath, Karunanidan and Yatindramohan Bagchi. In the earliest phase of his poetry the influence of Tagore is hardly discernible except in occasional phrases. As the writer of *Agni-Bina*, he was temperamentally poles asunder from Tagore. The deep spirituality of Tagore is beyond the reach of Nazarul. On the other hand, the revolutionary ardour, the fierce enthusiasm, the rich and wild emotional abandon, the gorgeous super-ego toying with immeasurable space, time and, let us say, even the Deity, are some of the unique elements of his poetic output which Bengali literature has never had before.

To appreciate the full force and beauty of his poems, one should read *Bidrohi* (The Rebel), *Pralayaullas* (The Joy of Deluge), *Dhum-Ketu* (The Comet), *Kemal Pasha*, *Anwar Pasha*, *Rana-Bheri* (War Drum) and *Korbani*. While *War Drum* is a finely-spirited poem, the last one degenerates into sheer blood-lust and a confusion of brutality with strength. The worst realism of Masefield is, what Mr. Maynard points out, " to dabble his hands in pools of blood." Between the cult of brutality and the cult of delicacy, as expressing æsthetic sensibility, there is nothing much to choose, for the simple reason that a cult always implies some deliberate aim, some motivated construction. Since the days of Homer and Mahabharat, the brutal, side by side with the beautiful, has found artistic expression in best literature. But ours is too much of a self-conscious age, and it is more than likely that art, instead of being a free expression of the

human spirit, is likely to be used more and more in the interest of a particular cult or creed—political and social, or it may more and more be inspired by ingenious æsthetic shock-tactics in the guise of originality while the real motive is to capture public attention.

All the same, those who initiate a cult or a novelty are generally more true to their original feelings and inspirations than those who imitate them. The jingoistic vein of Kipling, the chauvinistic energy of Henley, the Nietzschean fulmination of John Davidson, the coarse brutality of *The Everlasting Mercy* of Masefield are all genuinely expressive of the militant faith of the respective poets. While Masefield puts his energy into his verse to fight the ugly and evil in life, Kipling thunders out for the solidarity of the British Empire, and Nazarul stands as a champion of truth, freedom and justice, as a battler for democratic ideals and noble courage. Nonsectarian by temperament, he deplores and denounces the orthodoxy of Hindus and Mohammedans. More than one poem celebrate the joy of his setting fire to the top-knots and beards,—the familiar symbols of Hindu and Mohammedan fanaticism respectively. In championing human liberty, no writer in Bengal has shown a freer and braver spirit. During the Great War he volunteered his services in the fighting ranks on behalf of Democracy and the Allied Powers, and as an upholder of the cause of national self-determination, he risked his own personal liberty. Right or wrong, there is no reason to suspect the genuineness of his ideal passions. His poems are far from realistic because his passions are directed against far more fundamental issues of the racial life of Bengal. The evils that Masefield delineates, such as the squalor and stenches and drunkenness, or a murder followed by capital punishment, are like minor plague-spots on the otherwise wholesome body-politic of England, whereas the evils that Nazarul attacks are so pervasive and deep-rooted that they are of the nature of national degeneration. That is why, in his poetry the closeness of realistic observations and remarks give place to sweeping general statements of wider import. Inept and infelicitous linking

of things inherently beautiful with things inherently ugly is a feature of Masefield's most famous narrative poem. Except in a few political and satiric poems, and, as suggested above, in a few poems engendered by a militant spirit, ugliness and realism are the two things that are conspicuous by their absence in Nazarul's verse. He seems to reserve the realistic observations for his fictional writings in prose which belong to a later development of his literary career.

In *Chayanat* his poetry assumes a mild and reflective tone. A few lines or stanzas here and there are alive with a rare sensitiveness and a loving tenderness, as are the first three stanzas of *Shayak-Bendha Pakhi* (Bird pierced by an Arrow). While lacking the poetic intensity and impetuous strength of his earlier volumes, there is a distinct advance in the realization of finer sentiments delicately interwoven with the milder aspects of nature and her beauty.

In the volume *Sarba-hara* (The Destitute) Nazarul turns his attention again to the social and political conditions of his country. Here the poet's thoughts are more pronounced and crystallized than his emotional side. *Samya-bad* (Liberalism) reads somewhat like John Davidson's Testaments, only Nazarul's series of poems are on a smaller scale. These embody the views he entertains regarding the question of liberalism itself and his ideas about "God," "Humanity," "Sin," "Prostitution," "Women," and "Coolies and Workers." The last poem is an appeal for a more generous recognition of the essential worth of coolies in the corporate life of society. He appears as a bold and radical thinker at war with the law and religion, customs and traditions, of not only his own country, but of all countries. A visionary and idealist at heart, he thinks and feels in terms of a world yet unborn. His fervour of patriotism, his moral enthusiasm, his intellectual ideals, and realistic interpretation of certain elements of contemporary life are the noteworthy features of this volume. No less important is the interesting poem *Amar-Koifiyat* (My Answer) that deals with the poet himself. A man who can turn his glance at himself humorously and

who can watch the activities of his friends and foes with their benevolent and malevolent approaches in a humorous light has the making of a great man in him.

In *Phani-Mansa* his reforming zeal is not unabated although other matters claim his attention. The departed soul of the elder poet Satyendranath has elicited two noble poems from his pen, of which the smaller one appears as a gem of lyric passion while the longer one contains some biographical material. The nationalistic fervour, however, is as much a part of Nazarul as his poetic temperament. That is why a poem like *Hindu-Muslim Fight* introduces his readers to one of the ugliest features in the history of contemporary India. But the poet interprets it as a symbol of national awakening and closes the poem on a note of optimistic faith that a deeper and wider awakening of collective consciousness will be followed by a recognition of the essential brotherhood of the two warring communities.

From the point of view of realism the two volumes *Sindhu Hindol* and *Chitta Nama* are of no importance. Even the poem *Daridra* (Poverty), where realism of some sort may legitimately be expected, is disappointingly abstract in conception and highly emotionalized in rendering. The latter volume takes its name from the famous Bengali leader, Chittaranjan Das.

The writing of verse for children may not be as easy as it looks. The gay and playful note that he strikes in *Jhinge Phul*, verses ostensibly written for children, presents another aspect of Nazarul's genius, namely, that of the lover and jolly companion of children. The best of children's verse always displays a delightful combination of the real and the fantastic, the more so because the whimsical, wayward, incongruous and extravagant elements spring from the closest range of reality familiar to children. Tagore's and Stevenson's best efforts in this direction are cases in point. Nazarul's attempt, particularly in *The Baby and the Squirrel*, is of this nature, although his play of humorous fancy is marked by a too boisterous animation which presumably is in harmony with the poet's ebullient temperament.

Apart from the above volumes, he has produced *Bulbul*, *Jingir* and *Naoroj*. The latter two betray a decline in the quality of his inspiration, while the poems themselves present a disconcertingly polyglot appearance by a none-too-pleasant admixture of what is called Mohammedan Bengali. Nazarul is a prolific writer. Apart from his longer poems, he has turned out numerous songs for a gramophone company, the poetic quality of which is naturally far from satisfactory. Endowed as he is with musical talent, his choice of diction and rhythm is sometimes dictated by the double motive of adding singing quality to a composition, which is rich in verbal music and which of itself sings, if only it be read properly. The volume *Bulbul* has a glaring instance of this in *Mridul Baye, Gopan Chaye* with its flawlessly perfect, albeit artificial, metrical modulation and melodic beauty.

Lastly, regarding Nazarul's realism and contemporary consciousness, it may be pointed out once more that his vigorous verse came as a welcome relief after the ceaseless procession of namby-pamby verses with their cultivated nuances, their effete similes and metaphors, their thoughts and ideas becoming increasingly monotonous by persistent reiteration, just as Mr. Masefield's brilliantly coarse *Saul Kane* was welcome among a certain section of poetry lovers on its first appearance when a conscious reaction against Tennysonian tradition had not yet taken place. In the matter of absorbing foreign phrases and scientific terms in his poetry, Nazarul shows as much capacity and ready gusto as any of the English and American radical poets, although it must be conceded that the need to express one's poetic consciousness in scientific terms, in vocabularies used to describe the limbs and mechanisms of an aeroplane or automobile or locomotive, or in the terminologies used by mechanics, electricians, mining or shipping engineers, is not so much of a necessity with Bengali poets as with the Anglo-American poets, for the processes of industrialization, modernization, urbanization and commercialization have not gone so far in India as they have in England or America. The civilization of India is still mainly agricul-

tural. Rural life and atmosphere still occupy the largest part of the conscious thought of most individuals. Petrol pumps and filling stations have not as yet installed themselves on the cross-roads in Indian villages. In these circumstances, if poetry does express its thoughts and sentiments predominantly through images borrowed from nature and rural life, there is no reason for regarding it as behind the times. In the faculty of sympathetic interpretation of the needs and troubles of the poor working-class people, Nazarul's poem *Coolies and Majurs* in *Sāmya-Bād* compares favourably with the proletarian poems of Stephen Spender, and other younger poets ; but in spirit and in his rhapsodical outburst he is more akin to Carl Sandburg without the American poet's crudeness of artistry.

B. S. BANERJEE.

FOR EDWARD, MY BROTHER, ALSO AMERICAN

WE remember so many things, my brother,
All the generations that came and went in Nenagh
Since Brian reigned at Tara—
John and James and Ned and James and Malachi
A song unending singing in our blood.
We remember a cottage our eyes have never seen
Whose weathered walls are worn with wind and rain
Of centuries, and someday soon we'll walk
The same old road packed tight by countless feet
Of men who bore our name.
By turf-fires at evening like gyring incense burning
Our fervid Druid hearts shall hymn Beltane.
We remember a gay and gallant gentleman
Who, exiled like Aeneas, slacked his sails
On stranger shores and built his little kingdom.
There found he far from home his gentle lady
Whose hands and his fenced in our quiet cove
(Madonna, Madonna, we too have seen Thine eyes)
So many things, so many tiny things
We know that we alone can ever know—

The way you said my name when you were two,
The games we've played, the places we have been,
The lake near Binniewater whipped by waves,
The pony trotting round in Central Park.
And even into time and space we've travelled
Aboard the same stout vessels vellum-bound.
The digits of our days have added up
To totals much the same.
What need have we
Of slow and stolid speech when each reflects
As in a glass the other's heart and brain?
And often you tell me what I told you
And think the thought your own. Thus too do I,
So single our twin undivided selves.

The love of women is a shaky hut
Compared to this cathedral carved in stone,
This monolith no passing storm can fell
Tight-buttressed by ten thousand yesterdays.
And though a pebble here and there may be
Dislodged, the massive edifice will stand
Foursquare to all the blasts of chance and fate.
Fear not and never doubt.
We will come through
Together
O my brother.

JOHN MAHER MURPHY.

CONFESSION

I WILL remember April,
I will remember May,
And how my heart repeated
The things I could not say.

How precious was your silence,
How precious, and profound,
Were all your cherished answers
Uttered without a sound.

LUCY KENT.

DREAM TIME

IT lingers on this time of paradise,
This little sleepy world I make my own;
I dwell in dreams from sunset to sunrise,
And when I wake those little dreams have grown.
For day dreams take the place of those at night,
And sitting on a heap of stones I weave
A tale into my mind so very bright
That nothing in this world will make it leave.
The birds and trees and flowers all appear,
And haunting visions of a joyous day,
And lovely thoughts which chase away all fear
Run through my sleepy mind like silver spray.
And so adieu to day dreams once again,
The night has come, more dreams flit through my brain.

MAIRI STEWART.

THE SPIRIT OF THE CHILD

EAGER, gay and joy-beguiled
Is the spirit of the child:
With what delight,—
What innocent surprise
Its questing psyche greets
The morning hours
Of wonderment and fun!
Winged as the brittle flight
Of bees and one-day butterflies
Sampling the sweets
Of honey-heavy flowers
Nodding in the sun.

As yet sublimely unaware
Of life's perplexities: despair,
Whose bleak, abominable face
Stares across staggering gulfs of space,
Down dim immensities of time:
Of death and suffering and crime,
The convolutions of repressed desire,
The urge to greed, the promptings to acquire

The world's dross : and that yielding stage by stage
Which constitutes man's adult heritage.

Though wayward, immature and wild
Is the spirit of the child,
It would be folly to maintain
That grey-beards, covetous and vain,
Strangers to joy, than marvelling youth
Drink deeper at the well of Truth.

E. CURT PETERS.

TO A FIRST NOVEL'S HEROINE

THE difference between fact and fancy lies
Along the span that links the mind and heart;
And you, the child of fathomless desire,
Born of a thought, were bred in such deep love
That you have taken form, and yet may be
When what imagined you has gone beyond
This waste of shattered dreams, and reached the goal
Where you, your very self, may be fulfilled
To that imagination's swift content.

IËRNE ORMSBY.

AGE

DEATH hath forgotten her,
And passed her over,
In favour of the young.
A greedy lover!
And she, a wintry leaf,
So frail and slender,
So aged beyond belief,
Too long a rover.
Though death comes in release
With arms more tender
Than hers, which held the babes
Cold earth doth cover;
Yet most he loves the young,
This greedy lover!

JOAN BEVAN.

INTROSPECTION

WHY these cross-currents of intemperate blood,
This ebb and flow of passion's heady sway;
Projections, hate and love, night chasing day,
Moods not by reason owned or understood?

This pious wish to further human good,—
The jungle-feud and leopard-lust to slay,
This waste of war, the blast and splinter way;
Force paramount, red tyranny in flood.

This lily-soul rooted in mire and slime,
Corruption-fed and nurtured in a fen;
Yet ever questing for its native light.

This prison house of flesh, these walls of time,—
The dewy dawn, the dusty noon, and then,
Cloud-shadowed evening and oblivious night.

G. S. ODDY.

FATA MORGANA

WHERE shivering sallows lick the quivering stream,
And silence floats in ripples on the wind,
Where mossy-smooth dunes of warmth move, tossing the bream
Bemused, and washing sunlight on the sands
Of shadows . . . I wander, lost in shallows of dream
That slowly suck decisions from my mind,
Until it lies peaceful, bare, unlit by the beam
Of thought; a landscape featureless, of strands
Unseen.
But something wavers in this barren tract
Of brain; an oasis of sound divides
The desert, surges in confusion curved
With words, and tuneless on the tides
Of time, emerges as a song:
Dragging the dying street,
the feet of countless dead
day-long tread.
We want bread.

dead dead dead
dead
dead
dead

The sound subsiding in a long
And lifeless echo, like a lone
Remote mirage, that the desire has carved
In light, all motive dies. No restless stone
Of notion, flight of theory impelled by fact
Disturbs the arid waste-land of my mind.
No wanderer strides beside me, banding the dream
With rands of reason, fastening the will
Between the belief in things unseen, and the gleam
Of sudden logic. Only on the wind
The strife of unceasing movement stifles the bream,
And hills of heat perpetually still
The ripples of floating silence stippling the stream.

CON HARVEY.

In this poem, "I" represents the aesthetic poet living in beautiful surroundings, to whom the terrible reality of unemployment and starvation (or malnutrition, as it is now called) in the slums, is as unreal as a mirage in a desert.

REFUGEES

"MAY we have some milk, and a little bread,
A roof to shelter us," they said,
"And any sort of bed.
And that is all we want, but just to think
And cry a little, and then to fall asleep.
No thank you, sir, we shall not use the ink,
We have no word to write,—but just to weep."

And now the lights are out, and all is still,
But no one lurks to kill
Or to intrude.
And such a calm is hardly understood
By little refugees
Like these.

RACHEL E. BOULTON.

THE FRONTIERS OF POETRY

The mind of man has a knowledge of truth beyond the near-truths of science and society. I believe that poetry tells the truth. . . . We do not come to poetry by running away from life—Dr. Bronowski ("*The Poet's Defence*").

Poetry in my opinion must be honest before anything else and I refuse to be "objective" or clear-cut at the cost of honesty—Louis MacNeice ("*Autumn Journal*").

Poetry does not state truth, it states the conditions within which something felt is true—Stephen Spender ("*The Still Centre*").

THE purpose of poetry has fascinated poets and critics for generations, each applying to the subject his own deliberate design and believing that his analysis would give a more profound appreciation of the "godlie art." In the end, despite the cleaning of old windows and the building in of new ones, such theses have invariably collapsed under the swing of controversy and regrettably tended to obscure for the layman the enjoyment of what is really a simple outlet for human expression. Instead of being uplifted, as Mr. Herbert Read would say, the poetry lover is dragged through tunnels of analysis where the only light is a spluttering match of half-truths and where the way to "a purer understanding of the function of poetry" ends in an intellectual *cul-de-sac*.

To be frank, the mystical body of poetry cannot be conclusively explained. Poets have embraced nature, spiritualism, political and sociological doctrines as a justification for what I term their particular mental prejudice and, to put it crudely but forcibly, it has all resulted in eyewash.

In the foreword to his important book, *The Poet's Defence* (Cambridge), Dr. J. Bronowski remarks :

"What is the ideal which poets have held? It is an ideal which they have not seen alike. Dryden saw it as the root mind of man, Wordsworth as his root passion, Sidney as his Virtue. These ideals have only this in common, that each is set against the worldly and social life of men."

This is indeed true, but idealism, whatever its characteristics, is a mental frontier and inevitably prohibits clear, untrammelled expression. Idealism, even though its roots grow from the sinews of a super-sensitive mind, even though it is the longed-for heaven as opposed to an existing destructive element in society, is in itself aciduous and self-consuming. Idealism, or, to be more correct, the belief that such and such a concept should be the sole concern of the creative artist leads nowhere, it is a policy of isolation, and one is tempted to the conclusion that poetry is indeed justified by just being an end in itself. The poet may reflect in his work the minutiae of life, he may record his passions, his loves, his hatreds, his sorrows and his joys, he may even cleave asunder the social structure around him, he may sow the seeds of his idealism in the lean gardens of public imagination, but the beliefs die in the mass mind just the same, and all that remains is the memory of a line or a stanza which exist not because of the efficacy of any particular doctrine but due, perhaps, to the writer having recorded an experience in time, which, for many of us, has been still-born.

Wherever one finds a person expounding a set of rules for art-forms there one finds weakness. Imagism, naturism and so on may emerge in striking poems, but these cults do not exalt the mind because the sluice of imagination is surrounded by artificial frontiers, and if poetry is to come " like the leaves from a tree," the mind, including the body, must be free. Dr. Bronowski believes that poetry tells the truth. In a fascinating, dry manner, without frills, he avers that " the mind of man has a steady shape which is the truth. . . . The urges of passion are part of the steady shape of the mind and all these are true in all societies. They make an absolute truth, which I think is the truth of poetry," and so he traces the growth of poetic beliefs through Dryden, Wordsworth and Coleridge and then beyond Shelley, with the " truth concept " as the basis of his study. In pressing his claim that there is only one poetic worth: Truth, Dr. Bronowski is careful to avoid calling it an ideal because an ideal is a vague fanciful term.

And yet when one considers Truth as life, as experience, as something desirable, as something unconsciously in the nature of man, there matures the thought (let us forget that it may be a quibble) that even this " worth " is an indefinable ideal or a vague fancy. To be mediocre—What is Truth ? Is it not, in fact, the embodiment, so far as poetry is concerned, of every poetic concept and that each concept, belief, experience, is a necessary part of the whole? If Wordsworth adopts Nature as an ideal it is surely an essential part of Truth, and if Shelley adopts the machine of imagination it is also a part of Truth. The twentieth century poet goes to Spain or China and writes what he regards as the truth of his experience ; he forgets, however, that his experiential absorption has been filtered by imagination, emotion, physical and mental horror, and so what he really portrays is Dr. Bronowski's " near-truth." One cannot say—" This is the shape of my mind, and my mind, being a pure apparatus, is the Truth." Nay, but one can say, " This is the reaction of my whole being which, preserving the unerring qualities of instinct, gives the substance of Truth."

I agree with Dr. Bronowski when he holds that this Truth is something more than passion, something more than great living. But I do not agree when he says that Shelley's " science of the imagination " was a futile fancy; indeed, I am sure that this " fancy," this poetic life as outlined in *The Defence of Poetry* was to Shelley a facet of the true mind, the universal mind, and even if it were conceived to bolster up an alleged deficiency, it must have had for Shelley the elements of Truth. Indeed, it does not really matter what Coleridge or Dryden or Swinburne or Housman or Yeats believed, what matters is that they created from these beliefs pleasurable truths common but unexpressed in the herd-mind. This is where Dr. Bronowski, I think, has erred. I have yet to find it conclusively proved that the great ones sacrificed poetry for the sake of ideals.

" Shelley's theory of imagination," Dr. Bronowski declares, " tells us at most why poets write. What we ask of such a theory is to tell us why poets write as they do."

This I fail to understand. If a theory explains why a poet writes, it seems to me that that in itself indicates the creative process with all its diverse characteristics. Of course, I have not thought so deeply on the matter as Dr. Bronowski and it is perhaps my great loss that I do not think "geometrically," but I do feel that criticism which tries to explain the essence and function of poetry is really attempting, as it were, a thesis on the why of birth from a spermatic emission. If Dr. Bronowski believes that poetry as TRUTH is really a revelation of the vital, undying spiritual nature of man then I agree, but if he avers that theories of Imagination, Nature, Pleasure and so on are idle fancies and have no roots in the shape of mind then I can only regret my inability to accept such a premise. For me all theories from Laforgue, Mallarmé to the present day are frontiers, and I feel that the reason why Wordsworth, Dryden and Coleridge have not been succeeded by any living British poet, with the exception of de la Mare and Yeats, is due to the fact that the natural impulses of the mind to-day are being restricted by futile experiments in language devoted to biological, archaeological and scientific terminology, and a form of inverted politico-theology.

And this, by the way, has helped to strengthen the belief that poetry has no part in a scientific age. "Peacock said that poets were growing worse because they were growing out of date. He said that poems have no place in a more and more scientific society. This may be true: this book does not deny it," says Dr. Bronowski in his foreword. I wonder. To-day with the increasing industrial pace poetry is tending to become an automaton and where one would have hoped to find a poetic quality for the scientised life one lamentably discovers that the poet is willingly absorbing the mechanized destructiveness for which he has so often expressed hatred. In *Poetry and Anarchism* Mr. Herbert Read has written :

> "Deep down, my attitude is a protest against the fate which has made me a poet in an industrial age. For it is almost impossible to be a poet in an industrial age."

It seems to me that the industrial side of life is not the real reason for the disintegration of the poet. The reason is in the poet himself. The futuristic design of living has permeated the mind of man to such an extent that he feels he is not living unless he imparts the chaos of his age through his writing. "Back to the people," is the cry, but the modernist forgets that the people are at heart simple, passionate and clear-cut, and if the poet is to live as an actuality in the mass-thought he also must be simple, passionate and clear-cut. The revival of poetry in Goethe coincided with a renewed love of the folk-song, and thus it is possible that if our poets put aside academic experiments they may be able to recapture the much-desired communal spirit. Folk-poetry must be simple in language and ideas. With the "literary prejudice" modern poetry has become obscure, boring, artificial, whereas in Germany there is an underworld of music as in Stefan Georg Hofmannsthal, and Rilke. I do not mean of course that politics and questions of the time should be banned! no, no, but let our poet-educators read Vogelweide or Berchet—there lies modernism plus community of ideas. For me, at least, present-day poetry is comparable to the Minnensang —for the lords and ladies, the select few. But I do insist that poetry is essential in an age where life has become full of cruel falsities, and surely if the imaginative life is to survive someone must liberate the industrial-shackled poetry and extend its technical scope within the bounds of understanding. So far the process has been destructive. I cannot, however, accept the statement that it is impossible to be a poet in a scientific society, and I wish Dr. Bronowski had devoted some space to this interesting side of poetics. If great poetry is to be written it must emerge now, and if America can give us Hart Crane surely this country can produce a compeer. Great spirits thrive in difficult times, and if a poet wishes to be honest to the extent of being crude, then let him be so so long as he writes clearly and evocatively.

However, I am grateful to Dr. Bronowski for having suggested many delightful and fascinating topics. His

book is one which cannot be understood at a single reading, particularly the chapter on Dryden; nevertheless, *The Poet's Defence* contains some of the finest criticism produced in this land since the war.

From the criticism of poets and their beliefs we turn to the practicians—Messrs. Louis MacNeice and Stephen Spender. Mr. MacNeice, it appears, desires above all things to be honest to himself and, I presume, to the public. This honesty, however, is not the result of poetic frenzy but of discontent, and, as in the case of Mr. Herbert Read, resentment. In *Autumn Journal* (Faber) the writer records his "intellectual and emotional experience" between August and December, 1938. It is difficult, alas, to appreciate the justification (if any) for the publication of private reaction to public affairs, especially when the reaction takes the form of bald, unbalanced statement. I have tried to find in this long, badly constructed poem a gleam of original thinking—all I am rewarded with, however, is this platitudinous, outside statement:

> All that I would like to be is human, having a share
> In a civilized, articulate and well-adjusted
> Community where the mind is given its due
> But the body is not distrusted.

Mr. MacNeice has traced in this poem the complexities of his nature, but far from these complexities being new to the human being they are indeed very old remnants of a very imperfect civilization, and they have been sublimated with more effect by far better poets than the author of this unhappy work. In the first place, Mr. MacNeice has not the orderly mind for the composition of a poem of this length; in the second place, he does not have the imaginative virility with which to sustain it, and, in the third place, he lacks evocativeness. Certainly there are some finely drawn lines:

> "Wandering like dead leaves along a warehouse wall."
> ". . . our Spirit
> Would find its frontier on the Spanish front,
> Its body in a rag-tag army."
>
> The blue smoke rising and the brown lace sinking
> In the empty glass of stout

but these are mostly the result of a keen observation and not the result of super-imagination.

Autumn Journal is at most a very bad attempt at satire and parody, and one has only to read Pope and the Augustans aye, and even the much maligned Byron, to realize how bad is Mr. MacNeice. I simply cannot understand this :

> September has come and I wake
> And I think with joy how whatever, now or in future, the system
> Nothing whatever can take
> The people away, there will always be people
> For friends or for lovers though perhaps
> The conditions of love will be changed and its vices diminished
> And affection not lapse
> The narrow possessiveness, zealousy founded on vanity.

And the book is full of this prosaicness. No, no, Mr. MacNeice, this will not do! Indeed any man who tries to put this over:

> " And knowledge is not—necessarily—wisdom "

and this:

> " The pigeon's *riddle* the London air " (italic mine)

needs to overhaul his whole mental equipment. I can only explain my utter contempt for this recording of third-rate reactions to love affairs, world conditions and spiritual issues by taking a passage from Rilke and placing it beside one from *Autumn Journal*:

> Hab ich nicht recht ? Du, der um mich so bitter
> das Leben schmeckte, meines kostend, Vater,
> den ersten trüben Aufgutz meines Müssens,
> da ich hervonwuchs, immer wieder kostend
> und, mit dem Nochgeschmück so fremder Zukunft
> beschäftigt, prüftest mein beschlognes Aufschaun—
> der du, mein Vater, seit du tot bist, oft
> in meiner Hoffnung innen in mir Angst hast
> und Gleichmut, wie ihn Tote haben, Reiche
> von Gleichmut, aufgibst für mein bitzchen Schicksal,
> hab ich nicht recht ? Und ihr, hab ich nicht recht,
> die ihr mich liebtet für den kleinen Anfang
> Liebe zu luch, von dem ich immer abkam,
> weil mir der Raum in eurem Angesicht,
> da ich ihn liebte, überging in Weltraum,
> in dem ihr nicht mehr wort . . .

And Mr. MacNeice:

From the second floor up, looking north, having breakfast
I see the November sun at nine o'clock
Gild the fusty brickwork of rows on rows of houses
Like animals asleep and breathing smoke
And savouring Well-being
I light my first cigarette, grow giddy and blink,
Glad of this titillation, this innuendo,
This make-believe of standing on a brink!
For all our trivial daily acts are altered
Into heroic or romantic make-believe
Of which we are hardly conscious—Who is it calls me
When the cold draught picks my sleeve.

(Honesty, it would appear, is not always the best policy!)

Mr. Stephen Spender is regarded as a major poet. His first book of poems was accepted as an intimation of immortality, and it must be agreed that in *Poems* there were brilliant patches. Indeed, we would have been justified in saying that Mr. Spender at that time had the elements of greatness in his work. Since then, however, instead of a confirmation of first impressions, instead of greater unity there has been a collapse. It may be that the poet has exhausted his quota of ideas, it may be that the burden of life is too heavy for him or it may be that Mr. Spender has exhausted his adolescent virility of imagination and sensitivity to experience. Whatever it is *Still Centre* (Faber) is, if anything, a definite halt; indeed, I fear the poet is retracing his steps. In this volume there are only four poems worth preserving, *Polar Exploration*, *An Elementary School Class Room in a Slum*, *Two Armies* and *To a Spanish Poet*. The rest are commonplace. I do not infer, however, that Mr. Spender should have withheld publication; it is always interesting to follow the development of a first-rate intelligence, but I do feel that many of the poems would have benefited by closer scrutiny.

Such prosaic lines as—

. . . No one is given leave
On either side, except the dead, and wounded.

To break out of the chaos of my darkness
Into a lucid day is all my will.

are not what we expect from Mr. Spender, but it is good to come across such a Tennysonian line as this—

> On the chalk cliff edge struggles the final field

Yes, yes, we can see from the poems that the poet is striving to subdue the imposition of mass thought, striving to speak from experience rather than outside experience, and one can appreciate the tortures which such an effort involves. Mr. Spender, however, is too concerned about the subtleties of experience, too much occupied in explaining away his reactions with the result that his work is full of contradictions. Indeed, I cannot for the life of me perceive the unity of which the publishers are so proud. On the contrary, *Still Centre* is a chaos of thought, imagery, fantasy and "isms," and with the exception of the four poems I have mentioned Mr. Spender does not seem to know what he is talking about—in fact, he has great difficulty in disentangling his ideas.

Sometimes Mr. Spender imparts the impression that he is merely expressing everyday happenings in a loose form of common speech, and while it is interesting that Mr. Spender should seek to utilize current phrases and thought it does seem unfortunate that the poetic effort should become diffuse and maudlin as in *Thoughts During an Air Raid*—

> Of course, the entire effort is to put myself
> Outside the ordinary range
> Of what are called statistics. A hundred are killed
> In the outer suburbs. Well, well, I carry on,
> So long as the great "I" is propped upon
> This girdered bed which seems small like a hearse,
> In the hotel bedroom with flowering wallpaper
> Which rings in wreaths above, I can ignore
> The pressure of those names under my fingers
> Heavy and black as I rustle the paper,
> The wireless wail in the lounge margin.

This is certainly smart but ineffectual writing if nothing more! indeed, I am sure Mr. Spender does not look upon it as Poetry. If he does then what self-deceivers we are! There is too much summation of incident in *The Still Centre* to permit of imaginative flight, whereas in *Poems* by

that great Spanish poet Garcia Lorca, admirably translated by Mr. Spender and J. L. Gili (Dolphin Press) the opposite is the case. There is an admirable introduction to Lorca's life and work by R. M. Nodal and as he points out Lorca's destiny was

> . . . y mi sangre sobre el campo
> sea rosado y dulce bino
> donde claven sus azadas
> los cansados campesiños.
> —" and may my blood upon the field form soft
> red loam where the tired labourers can rest their spades."

In all the poems published here the imagery is luscious and true, and behind it all there is the feeling for the people and the aristocratic tradition of Spanish life! It is indeed the aristocracy of the spirit. Many of these poems, especially *Canto Nocturno De Los Marineros Andaluces* and the exquisite *Canción* beginning—

> The girl with the beautiful face
> is gathering olives.
> The wind, that gallant of towers,
> takes her by the waist. . . .

are strangely beautiful.

The translators have followed the original text very closely with the result that the intimacy and the magic of Lorca's work survives in such an extract from *Yerma*:

> Ah, what a measure of sorrow!
> Ah, what a door closed to beauty!
> I ask for a child to suffer, and the air
> offers me dahlias of sleeping moon.
> Those two fountains that I have
> of warm milk are in the closeness
> of my flesh, pulsation of two horses
> which make throb the brand of my anguish.
> Ah, blind breasts beneath my dress!
> Ah, pigeons without eyes or whiteness!
> Ah, what pain of imprisoned blood
> is nailing asps in my neck!
> But you must come, my love, my child,
> because the water bears salt, the earth fruit,
> and our belly guards tender sons
> as the cloud carries sweet rain.

The book is crowded with lovely poems—*La Casada*

Infiel, Casida de la Hulda beginning "I want to sleep the sleep of the apples," and many others.

One has reverence for such a poet and man as Garcia Lorca! *Dignus est Agnus qui occisus est, accipere virtutem et divinitatem, et sapientiam, et fortitudinem, et honorem.*

In conclusion I have read with relish *The Personal Heresy* (Oxford) by E. M. W. Tillyard and C. S. Lewis who fight out their case of the poet and his work. Both adopt different attitudes, and while the book is in many instances contradictory, which the controversialists realize, anyone who is interested in the art of controversy should obtain the book without delay. *The Poet's Defence* and *The Personal Heresy* should be on everyone's bookshelf.

MACCALLUM SMITH.

GERARD HOPKINS AND MILTON.

(*To the Editor*, THE POETRY REVIEW.)

SIR,—Mr. Heywood's reference to me in his article on Gerard Hopkins in your last issue provokes me to make a mild protest. This is really not due to Mr. Heywood; it is only due to the fact that he is the latest person to say that my Introduction to Hopkins' Verse was completely wrong in referring him to Milton. I am not concerned to defend my reference but I am impatient enough to point out two things—(1) Mr. Heywood says that "to have said 'Donne and his followers' would have been more correct", but he does not say that I rejected a comparison with Donne and his followers in so many words. I may of course be wrong but he should at least have suggested that I had thought of the comparison and refused it. (2) Neither Mr. Heywood nor anyone else has taken the least trouble to point out in what particulars I have said that Gerard Hopkins could be "related" to Milton. I have never suggested that Hopkins' diction and rhythms were like Milton, though in fact there is more similarity than might be expected. What I did say was that both Milton and Hopkins accepted exactly what Mr. Heywood quite rightly calls "an ultimate religious inspiration" and that it was within this that they both contended with the Universe in a quite different way from the general contention of the Metaphysicals. Their demands upon themselves and upon their poetry were of a different nature from that of Donne and it is in this "demand" that I have proposed the relation between them. And not in much else.

I am perfectly willing to believe that I may be wrong. I apologize to Mr. Heywood for venting a certain irritation upon his admirable article, but I do feel that it would sometimes be pleasant if there were

some indication given that anyone had read further than the name Milton in the Introduction.

Yours faithfully, CHARLES WILLIAMS.

Oxford University Press, May 18th.

Mr. Terence Heywood writes us in reply to the above:

I apologize to Mr. Charles Williams for not having been more explicit in my reference to his Hopkins-Milton parallel, and for giving the impression that I thought him completely wrong in that respect. It is not that I disagree that Hopkins can be related to Milton in the way he mentions, but only that I feel that relationship is not close enough to warrant the statement "the poet to whom we should most relate Gerard Hopkins . . . is perhaps . . . Milton." It seems to me misleading because the differences between their religions are so important; and where in Milton do we find the acute physical awareness so much in evidence in Hopkins? Hopkins but not Milton had what Eliot has called the "unified sensibility" of the metaphysicals; his intellect like theirs was at the tips of his fingers, and like them he had a surprise technique (Mr. Williams speaks of his "continual *shocks* of strength and beauty"). One of his main achievements is that he largely rejected the Spencer-Milton-Tennyson tradition in favour of more racy, more indigenous and mostly older traditions. Or so I believe. But (here let me substitute for my former dogmatism a modesty learned of Mr. Williams) I may be wrong.

Yours etc., TERENCE HEYWOOD.

Arundel, May 21st.

The British Academy's Warton Lecture on English Poetry was by Mr. G. M. Young, his subject being "The Age of Tennyson." In defining Tennyson's appeal Mr. Young emphasized his descriptive powers, in which he even eclipsed Thomson. This was particularly true of Tennyson's extraordinary facility in describing Nature. In the nineteenth century the spread of industrialism had left the English people conscious of their growing separation from Nature; Tennyson placed before them a series of flashing pictures, in faultless phrase, of that world from which they were exiled. Allied to his descriptive power and forming the basis of his appeal were Tennyson's gifts as a word painter and his command of the sententious, oracular manner. It was in the seventies that critics first began to make themselves heard, and people started to ask themselves "Is Tennyson exploiting or expressing himself?" Nor could anyone doubt that one of the main causes for this criticism of the poet lay in his over-seriousness. There was a fenced area round all serious topics where laughter might never be heard, and this hampered and weakened the whole age, and Tennyson with it. Quoting the closing part of *In Memoriam* beginning "Dumb is that tower," Mr. Young said that in those lines Tennyson has achieved the utmost that any age can ask of any poet.

*SPAN-FOOT VERSE IN (, , —)

In the previous issues of " The Poetry Review " for 1939 we saw that the rhythms of our conversational phrases ran very easily into verse with the Measures (, —) and ,(— ,), but with great difficulty into (— ,), chiefly because the articles (a, the) and similar flicks naturally belong to the strokes that *follow*, not those which precede them. Hence, while it is fairly easy, (though not always advisable) to keep Spans of Thought and Feet of Sound together " in step " with each other—with " fusion of sense and sound "—in (, —) and (, — ,), it is only as a " tour de force " that this can be done with (— ,) verse or with (— , ,) verse.

Now in (, , —) verse we have the advantage of the foot beginning with a flick, hence we find that once again very many of our conversational phrases can readily pass into verse. Yet, strange to say, this type of verse has been sadly neglected by our poets, almost as much as her " Cinderella " sister (, — ,) has been. But the ninety per cent bias of the " Iambic " in our verse has left little opportunity for the development of either of the two sisters. Herein lies a golden opportunity for our rising poets to develop the possibilities so far neglected.

Yet several of our poets have essayed to express their thoughts in this measure of verse. Have they failed through impatience, or lack of technique, or artistic waywardness, or what? In some cases the poet begins his first line in this measure very courageously—but he at once switches off into other measures, and never returns to the original. In other cases the poet begins, switches, returns, switches, but fails to give us the feeling of a Dominant Metre. Does he wish to do so? Does he manage his switches with such facility and artistry as will please us, or does he give us the feeling of haphazard work,—which sometimes but rarely gives the *feeling* of melody?

The enquirer who is anxious to find an answer to such questions might with advantage study the following poems:

I am monarch of all I survey	Cowper
At the corner of Wood Street (Poor Susan)	Wordsworth
He is gone on the mountain (Coronach)	Scott
As we rush, as we rush in the rain	J. Thomson
Had she come all the way for this?	W. Morris
I am tired of the wind	G. Bottomley
At the top of the house / the apples are laid in rows	Drinkwater
In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland	Swinburne
We are they who come faster than fate	Flecker

While we can understand Walt Whitman beginning a poem with " As I lay with my head in your lap, Camerado," (which is true Span-Foot), and straightway forsaking the metre, never to return to it, the other poets may leave us guessing. We may suppose that Scott in his " Coronach " added a flick at the end of each line (fountain, mountain) to " smooth " the abruptness of a stroke rime (fount, mount);

*The Editor regrets that in the May issue the word SPOT was substituted for SPAN.

but we still ask why in the case of a sudden death he should eliminate the abruptness from his verbal technique, since this effort at " smoothing " incidentally results in throwing his Dominant Measure out of gear for the beginning of the succeeding line. But as the consequence of this is to bring the lines forward as an interrupted succession of sobs, is there not after all an artistic justification in his method ? He loses this advantage however when he switches into (, — ,). But again, this is a justifiable Variation—from *Monotony*? Does the secret of failure lie in inability to eliminate possible monotony with artistic Variation ?

Here " The War Song of the Saracens " shows us how Flecker dealt with the problem. He preserves the *feeling* of the Dominant Rhythm throughout, whether in pure Span-Foot verse or in Crossdraw Variations. As an example of pure Span-Foot, with its ideal fusion of thought and sound in the same phrase, let us read.

But we sleep / by the ropes / of the camp /
and we rise / with a shout / and we tramp
With the sun / or the moon / for a lamp / and the spray
of the wind / in our hair

Now as an example of Crossdraw, where the thought and the Sound get " out of step ", we may take the following, where the device of " linked feet " allows of a quick return to the normal Span-Foot :

For the cow + ard was drowned / with the brave /
when our bat + tle sheered up / like a wave
And the dead / to the des + ert we gave /
and the glor + y to God / in our song

This artistry in result whether conscious or unconscious in conception, is surely worthy of the study of the glorious company of our young poets who are destined to carry on the traditions of their forbears through development.

As preparation for such work we would suggest, as in the previous articles, a few types of metric phrase which readily run into the Dominant Measure. Unfortunately there are but two main types ; but fortunately there are several varieties of these which will help to eliminate possible monotony :

1.—Preposition Phrase : in the air ; at a glance ; by return, etc.

2.—Subject and Predicate : he will sail ; I can come ; she is there ; we desire ; if we drive ; or we walk, etc.

For other varieties we may turn to the January Poetry Review and follow the list there given for (, —) phrases, adding another flick before the stroke thus :

1.—Article with Noun or Adjective:
a delight, an obtuse ( ), the relief
2.—Infinitive :
to regain, to alight, to defeat, to announce
3.—Auxiliary and Verb :
will believe, can secure, is derived, have allowed

4.—Preposition and Noun or Adjective :
of defence, with unwise ( ),
5.— Pronoun (unstressed) and Verb :
he replied ; she supposed ; who succeed ; that will flow
6.—Possessive (unstressed) and Possessed :
my request, his attempt,
7.—Connective and Connected :
and the streams, or a hill.

A study of the possibilities of these and similar phrases will prove very useful to a beginner ; and repetition of them will be found helpful in " tuning up " to the rhythm before actually composing.

Initial compositions should be, as far as possible, pure Span-Foot Verse, until some facility in such composition has been gained ; then such devices as " linked feet " and other variations will come in naturally without destroying the Dominant Rhythm.

Here, for (, , —) verse it is not so necessary to give examples as it was in the case of (, — ,) verse (in Poetry Review May). Probably the following examples will suffice to show that pure Span-Foot can easily be made in (, , —).

HE'S A BOY.

With a book in his hand or a ball at his toes
He's a boy who is keen on the task as he goes
He will work for a rise to the top of the roll
And will pass or will shove till he scores in the goal

He will slip from his School to a place in the Scheme
He will train to be fit for the work of the team
And at Home or Abroad to his post as he goes
Have a book for his hand and a ball for his toes

IN THE AIR.

Will you come for a flight in the air ?
There is scope for your skill if you dare
We can rise till we soar like a kite
With the curve and the swerve of delight
We can climb to the clouds and beyond
Till the height and the depth correspond
We are here we are there and afar
Till we glide through the night like a star
As we gaze on the earth of our folk
At the roofs and the lights and the smoke
And we feel we are high above all
To return at a wish or a call
For we trust in our strength and our skill
With the wings that will fly as we will

W. H. STEPHENS.

Love Songs for Young Lovers

(*To the Editor*, The Poetry Review.)

Sir,—Your reviewer, Mr. T. Weston Ramsey, (The Poetry Review, June 1939) is fully entitled to make it plain that he dislikes my poetry, but not to insult Mr. Bernard Shaw and Mr. John Masefield by printing in your columns that " it is lamentable " that they should " lend their names to the puffing of inferior work ". In defence of Mr. Bernard Shaw and Mr. John Masefield your readers should be informed that my poems have also gained the appreciation of our greatest living master of the sonnet, Lord Alfred Douglas, who says of my book, " It is full of real poetry. I particularly like the sonnets " : that Mr. Laurence Binyon writes, " Your poems breathe the atmosphere of creative joy " ; that Sir Arthur Quiller Couch writes, " I have read the poems twice over already, twice to recover from the shock of finding this additional gift in you, for you have it indeed "; that Walter de la Mare writes, " I have been reading the poems again with renewed delight " ; Ivor Brown, that " Your poetry has the pulse of life in it. The frankness of purpose and surge of phrase which perfectly suit the vital theme " ; Dr. Havelock Ellis writes, " You enter this new field in so fresh and inspired a spirit even when the theme is ancient ", —these and others form a group of readers " fit though few ", sufficient to neutralize any sting in Mr. Ramsey's insult to Mr. Bernard Shaw and Mr. John Masefield for honouring me by their praise.

Yours faithfully, Marie C. Stopes.

Norbury Park, near Dorking, Surrey.

Our Reviewer supplies the following comment of the above complaint :

Dr. Stopes has certainly amassed an amazing number of approving comments and for this she is to be congratulated. They are however unable to alter my personal conviction that the poems in question are not very good ones ; and that there are a number of good ones still being published without any such flourish of trumpets.

It is difficult also to resist a doubt as to how far these experts are influenced sub-consciously by the author's known and acknowledged eminence in another sphere of work.

In any case she has little cause for complaint : the British Public will always read with avidity and docility whatever a concourse of authorities tells them to read ; and one protesting voice won't stop them.

A member writes : As I now enter my third year of membership it gives me pleasure to write that the last two years have been very happy ones in new associations and fellowship with the Society. Every two months I look forward with eagerness for the arrival of The Poetry Review.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY : LXXIX

Evelyn Watson has worthily won the title of Laureate of Buffalo and the Niagara frontier. In her work of helping to found the Buffalo Poetry Society she has rendered an important service to New York. A member of several poetry groups, local and national, a winner of a number of prizes and citations and other honours, she is an inspiring example of what may be accomplished with faith and energy and poetic talent to overcome difficulty.

Miss Watson feels that poetry is a refining influence desirable in the school and in the home. Her Niagaras are many of them described as organ music but her present collection of lyrics, *Anthem of the Ages*, are more varied. Her work is called sensitive and dynamic, marked by a bright objectivity despite her physical handicaps.

Quoting from the first poem, " High Adventure," we give the first and last stanzas :

> All is a high adventure ; even this dark
> Is like gay passage through a sudden tunnel :
> Who cares for silvery drops of rain which runnel
> A-down the nose ? One hails the spirit of a lark
> Who soars to find some tinted morning star
> His song both dignified and jocular. . . .
>
> A serious adventure when fresh fame
> Has given one a crown of flowers, or lead—
> While possibly the body went unfed—
> There's quiet modesty which boasts no name
> And shy, wise mirth in subdued humbleness
> Which has both joy and sorrow to confess.

In these 200 pages we find some beautiful poems. " White Witchery " is a very good example of the vigorous gift of Miss Watson:

> Enchantment moves across the sky,
> astonishment upon the sea—
> While wonders sleep in mountains—I
> ask what of all humanity ?
>
> The air is drenched with flame and song,
> vast ships return with India's gold ;
> earth yields her booty to the strong—
> Soul spans all spheres so manifold.
>
> Within the light a rainbow sleeps ;
> a house lies builded in a plan—
> Within That Mind are ocean deeps—
> Man rests in God, He moves in Man.

In the service of Beauty, this poet has crowded out the unbeautiful. We are grateful to her.

Many fine things are said of the poetry of Florence Dickens Stearns, President of the Poetry Society of Virginia and author of a new volume of verse, *Strange Dimensions* (G. P. Putnam's, New York). Born in Georgia, her grandfather Samuel Fowler Dickenson, the uncle of the famous poet Emily Dickenson, left his native town of Amherst, Mass. for the State of Georgia. Mrs. Stearns was brought to Virginia when very young and expressed early her gift for writing, at first, through metropolitan newspapers, later turning successfully to poetry, the technique of which she taught at William and Mary College Extension. She is the author of two plays, *The Crystal Ball* and *Catherine of Russia*.

Her reviewers recognize three qualities very marked in her work—absolute clarity, exactness of expression, a rare talent for tropes that are at once apt and ornamental for their own sake.

Mrs. Stearns writes to us:

> "I like the stimulation of a fresh vocabulary in verse, but deplore the tangent toward left-wing poetry. The cult of unintelligibility leaves me cold. It is, as Max Eastman has so aptly said, 'like talking to one's self.' AND—Surrealism is (to me) like viewing a road map without taking a trip. It gets you nowhere. While I realize that experiment keeps the individual from standing still, I greatly doubt that these experiments improve the quality or the interest of poetry."

The challenging claims made by Mrs. Stearns' admirers are justified by the first short fine poem in her collection, "Chart":

Diagram stars if you will,
  Reckon some platinum moon,
No angle can compass the thrill
  Of a mocking bird's tune.

There are stars in the soul of a man
  A telescope never can follow.
No circle can better the plan
  Of the nest in the willow.

The green perpendicular rise
  To the curve of a rose
Is as great as the figured surprise
  A micrometer shows.

A lens may be had for its hire
  And the stars will reply,
But degrees cannot measure the fire
  In a personal sky.

We turn next to a sequence of twelve sonnets. Favouring the Shakespearian form, Mrs. Stearns says just what she means to say. Let us pause a moment and appreciate the importance of such a gift,

I often turn to my secretary and say : " What is it he means to say ? Where are we now ? What are we about ? " There is no such fog in this poet's expression.

We choose the second sonnet :

On yesterday, from a low bridge, we caught
The miracle of colour in a pool ;
A black swan casual to beauty, sought
A fringe of willows, shattering with cool
Indifference the gold and violet
Illusion of the sun. At this your eyes
Disturbed me as a vision faintly set
Into a dream in curious surmise.
I almost know that once you thought of love.
That once your passion burned in strong desire
On some determined quest wherein you strove
For mastery. How else this transient fire ?
And so I wondered what your look could mean,—
A heaven, an earth, or some dim world between ?

And so it goes in this delightful volume. The first stanza of " Old Walls " :

I understand the language of old walls,
And in the chambers of my heart they spread
Their rich equivalent ; my heart's own halls
Are musical with words that they have said.

The following short poem is suggestive of the genius of Mrs. Stearns' relative, Emily Dickenson : " Theft "—

You took away so much of me,
And yet so much you left,
It beggars all credulity
To reason on the theft.

You took of what equation is
To even, balanced me,
And left me areas of this :
Subtracted entity.

The poetry of Irene Wilde has found space in most of the distinguished magazines of poetry and the best newspapers—the recipient of prizes from the Southern California Festival of Allied Arts, the North Carolina Poetry Society, the Georgia Poetry Society and the Southern California Woman's Press Club.

" Bright Interlude," the first poem from her new volume, *Fire Against the Sky*, shall introduce her to us :

I leaned upon the April wind
And held my palms upcurled
To catch the wonder splashing down
From the rim of the tilted world.

My hands were white as blossomed plum
Immersed in the liquid moon;
Quicksilver drenched my lifted face
In a cataract of noon.

In this resplendent interval,
The mesas of my night
That lay in autumn were submerged
In spring's torrential light.

All the world knows and loves Will Rogers. Miss Wilde celebrates him as follows: "For a Certain Cowboy Gone West":

When time's long tether broke and set you free,
On some horizonless far Western range,
Finding your way, you rode familiarly
Along the starry trails that were not strange,
Surveyed the horns of Taurus unabashed;
And when the reckless dark let down the bars,
Lean thigh upon your mustang's flank you dashed
Against the peril of stampeding stars—
You galloped through the thundering herd of night,
Humming a stave of some old prairie tune,
And with a gesture, versatile and light,
You hurled your lariat around the moon.

The following will surely delight the temperance union:

Let no one talk to me of temperance now.
The wine of life flows freely for my sake.
And I am sick of dull sobriety.
Give me the bowl, the bread of beauty break!

The scarlet dawn shall touch my lips with flame,
And night that wears a coronet of stars
Upon the braided darkness of her hair
Shall hold me close to her and call my name.

Let no one counsel! I shall spend my days
With passion and with feasting, wantonly—
My love, the flaming dawn, the dusk; my bread,
The beauty broken on the land and sea.

In the confusion of this hour, when neutrality appears to be the watchword of America, we sit and ponder. Turn to your Bible, if you have one—I have two—and learn the imperishable lesson that the wee small voice called conscience, given to us at our birth, is never neutral. And, since we are turning in thought to the best teachings, Miss Wilde gives us "Ultimate Quest";

In everything that I pursue
I am seeking only you—
In beauty I aspire to trace
Some faint renewal of your grace,
In pleasure seek the counterpart
Of deity faned within my heart,
In work I eagerly devise
Abridgement unto paradise—
In worship I conspire with God
Against the hunger of the sod.

Musician and poet, Annie Laurie Trousdale presents her first collection of verse *Winging Far* (Putnam Sons, New York). Her home is Houston, Texas, and it brings to my mind, arriving in that fascinating town at Christmas time when the streets were hung heavily with festoons of green and the whole population seemed bursting with joy over the arrival of Christmas. One finds delightful people versed in the latest literature, wearing the latest fashions, inviting one to hunt-breakfasts, to houses filled with the best of paintings. One does not wonder that the writing of poetry is almost imperative here.

Miss Trousdale's first book comes to us well-heralded, romantic, writing her own words for her own musical setting; it is charming. "Pleiades And Neptune" follow:

Upon the stallion night
Ride my love and I
Off into other worlds
Through the moonlit sky.

On night's star spangled wings
Higher and higher mount
Drinking love's liquid fire
Near source of life's fount.

We pause in a garden on Mars—
Rest near an arbour there—
Taste of the vine's ripe fruit,
Life's secret lay bare.

Remounting this winged stallion
Again far away we fly
Past Pleiades and Neptune
Ride my love and I.

This book of poems is interestingly illustrated with eight pen and ink drawings by Chester Snowden.

Turning to the sonnet, this writer is at ease: "An Aspen":

I hear your voice—I am an aspen tree.
I am a harp in holy, golden land;
A symphony beneath a master's hand—
Angelic choirs that sing eternally
And songs of birds that ring from every lea
On sun-kissed morning after rain on land.
I am a song from bells, carillon-grand—
A song from waves from out the breathing sea.
A hymn from throats of bird's exalted lore
An anthem pealing from cathedral—high,
With pearly dome cloud-veiled in vaulted sky.
"Belovéd," sang the waves against the shore;
"A love as strong as all loves lifts my soul;
A love, augmented by all loves—my goal."

Poet, playwright and lecturer, Arthur Guiterman has an enviable following. A short time ago he occupied the presidency of the Poetry Society of America and the Authors League Fellowship. Perhaps the fact that Arthur Guiterman happened to be born in Vienna has given his poetry the beat and pulse of both music and laughter. We are thinking now of the Vienna of other days. Mr. Guiterman was educated mainly in New York and graduated from the College of the City of New York. Active in athletics, class secretary and poet, and one of the stars of the dramatic club, he received the Ward Medal for highest standing in English Composition at his graduation.

His previous volumes are: *Death and General Putnam*, *Gaily the Troubadour*, *I Sing the Pioneer*, *A Poet's Proverbs*, *Song and Laughter*. With his consistent humour, Mr. Guiterman writes: "The only rhymed comment of mine on poetry that I am sure will at least be short enough is this couplet that came to me when in our summer home in Vermont:

A poem should be like the brook that we hear
Sing down the mountainside—lovely and clear.

You may know that while I am deeply aware that in poetry so much more should be suggested than is said, I have always insisted on absolute clarity in the *surface* meaning of a poem."

In the preface to *Ballads of Old New York* (Dutton and Co.), Guiterman, after giving a very piquant if short account of New York and its environments, evidently dear to him, states: "a centre that offers opportunity with a fair field and no favour, always draws to itself vigour and talent." This volume contains, with an amazing dexterity in rhythm and rhyme, the story of those who have been figures in the history of New York. When some of the historic landmarks have long since crumbled or been destroyed, these songs of Guiterman's will bring them back to researchers after the past.

Let us turn to "New York," which after all is new every year:

The city is cutting a way,
The gasmen are hunting a leak;
They're putting down asphalt to-day,
To change it for stone in a week.

The builders are raising a wall,
The wreckers are tearing one down,
Enacting the drama of all
Our changeable, turbulent town.

For here is an edifice meant
To stand for an eon or more;
And there is a gospeller's tent,
And there is a furniture-store.

Our suburbs are under the plow,
Our scaffolds are raw in the sun;
We're drunk and disorderly now,
BUT—
'Twill be a great place when it's done!

Aside from the gift of joking—very good joking—Guiterman has that other side, which we find in his poem "A Dreamer":

Here lies a little boy who made believe;
Who found in sea and city, hill and star,
What wise men said were not; who loved to weave
Dream warp and woof more fair than things that are.
He made believe that heavy toil and stress
Were only play, and sang the while he wrought;
He made believe that wealth and fame are less
Than faith and truth—that love cannot be bought;
That honour lives; that far beyond the goal
That lures our eyes, to nobler ports we steer;
That grief was meant to forge the living soul,
And death itself is not for men to fear.
At last he made believe his play was played;
A kindly Hand the darkening curtain drew.
So well he made believe he nearly made
The world believe his make-believes were true.

Seven Men (G. P. Putnam's Sons), the fourth book of poems by Boris Todrin, brings further evidence that the early predictions about his career are being verified. Among his early sponsors was the late Edwin Arlington Robinson, who spoke of him as "the most promising young poet I have ever met." Others who have acclaimed his work are Ridgely Torrence, Mark Van Doren, John Hall Wheelock, William Rose Benet and many more.

On asking Todrin to say a word for or against poetry, he humorously reminds me that at such a request two years ago he sent me comment and, being two years older, he has at least found that lacking wisdom, he recognized the lack and, in a sedulously acquired Socratic manner, he must refrain from " putting words to paper which haven't more years than I can muster at their back."

A striking poem of recent vintage follows—" Spanish Sowing : 1938 " :

Worn out fields where bomb and shell
Scattered iron seeds of hell,
Grow their scarecrow crops. The torn
Bones will keep the roots of corn.

Now there is no single blade
Standing, where the live brigade
Wavered, mustered out and fled
To the armies of the dead.

Fighters grown upon the land
Shall be seeing where they stand,
Over the invaders' feet,
Broad backed regiments of wheat.

All lovers of E.A. will enjoy reading the following tribute, " Two Years : ' E.A.' " :

The church is here, the clocks have struck
Their bells across the square ;
Your friend still walks without his luck
Inheriting the air.

Two years, and in your greener ground
You surely know the reasons
They feed your friend from shells of sound
And cover him with seasons.

St. George's has two towered clocks
And they will talk together :
Your friend will hear them from the rocks
And live upon the weather.

" Caesar " follows :

In Rome not only moons of March show blood,
And there are cities, (where dead Caesar walks),
Unknown to his undaggered flesh. Who talks
Of liberty and franchise soon is stood
Against a wall. And what if Brutus could
Send Antony to keep his leader's bones ?
There are red stories written in the stones—
For Brutus was a liberal,—and good.

A man once walked in England and looked deep,
So deep into his time that when he saw
A troubled dream brimming a good man's eyes,
Brutus and Richard,—Hamlet stirred in sleep;
And looking for a word he found the law
That names us men under our moving skies.

Mrs. Marguerite Scribner Frost has travelled extensively and lived in many countries. Perhaps to give others the pleasure found in her journeys, she presents the present volume, *Love of Earth* (The Poets Press). We find a variety of forms and meters in this richly illustrated book. It may be said that different countries have for the sensitive different rhythms. "Desert Shadows" carries us to Biskra, Algeria. Quoting from this colourful account:

Ah, look about you in this desert country
And see the shadows brimmed with light!
See the long strips of blue and purple
Shot through with orange, rose, and gold—
Wellsprings of coolness vibrant with heartbeats of warmth!

To a friend of Mr. and Mrs. Frost, Ishbel, Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair, who died recently after a very full life: "Spell of Scotland":

Hazy and soft the landscape rolled
Away and away;
A violet-amethyst twilight lay
Like a slumber-robe on the drowsy gold
And brown of a closing summer day,
When I first saw Scotland.

Between the hills a frail gray mist
Slithered and twirled,
Slight as a feather that elves have curled;
I leaned from my window and saw it kissed
By a lonely cloud at the edge of the world—
Night came down on Scotland. . . .

Come Walk with Me by Howard Murray Whitman, (Dorrance and Co., Philadelphia, Pa.), another first collection, overflows with appreciation of beauty, as is portrayed in "I Have Met Beauty," of which we give the first and third stanzas:

I have met Beauty by the northern kyles,
And with her strayed
Where sun has filtered through the forest aisles,
'Neath birch trees shade;

Have touched her garments, turned enraptured eyes
On her sweet face;
Thrilled to her nearness, heard her gentle sighs,
In that enchanted place.

* * *

I have met Beauty in great cities, where
We turned our eyes,
To view the man-wrought wonders builded there,
High in the skies.
Through hurrying throngs she moved with rhythmic grace,
Close to my side
And, mirrored in man's works, her lovely face,
I viewed with swelling pride.

Challenging is Mr. Whitman's poem "Courage, My Soul." We give the first stanza:

Courage, my soul! I ask but this one gift
As I stand forth, my wearied hand to lift
And strike at foes of darkness gathered round;
Strike, till I fall insensate to the ground.
Courage! The strength to buoy me in the strife,
Courage to fight the ceaseless wars of life
Though bruised and bleeding sore. Oh give me strength,
And spur my flagging spirit through the length
Of warring years. Faint am I, sick at heart;
Sick unto death, from failure's poisoned dart.
Courage, my soul!

Mr. Whitman tells of his own reactions to poetry:

"Poetry makes its greatest appeal to me when employed as a vehicle for the tuneful telling of common, practical, and natural things. Of everyday thoughts and emotions, of love and cheerful helpfulness, of Beauty in her myriad forms, of Nature in her ever changing moods; of our joys and sorrows, our achievements and our failures. Things which come within the observation or experience of all. Even our most drab, and drear, and tragic experiences if told in poetic strain, lose something of their bitterness in the telling; and become inspirational forces urging us forward from failure to the performance of greater and nobler things."

ALICE HUNT-BARTLETT.

Mrs. Helen P. Wasburn (Ithaca, New York), writes: It seems to me that many modern poets are trying to make new, unusual and obscure combinations of words take the place of significant thought and feeling. Such poetry apparently does not find a place in THE POETRY REVIEW and, therefore, I can sincerely endorse the magazine.

POEMS AND PARODIES

THE POETRY REVIEW has received from Australia a notable volume of poems, *Adagio in Blue* (Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 6s.). The author, Mr. T. Inglis Moore, has at his command a wealth of language which he handles, in general, with mastery, if, perhaps, he once or twice slips from strength into ranting. And he has ideas. His love-poems show unusual freshness and richness, while such poems as his *Requiem* for his mother and *In Hospital* are moving poetry. Here are some lines from the latter which, though they will offend some by what they say, are undeniably poignant.

> Ah! Why should one lone cross
> Exalted be for holy loss
> And praise divine, when blood and bone,
> Spirit and nerves of man have known
> A million crucifixions pierce
> With the deep nails of anguish fierce?
> The rood was ordeal brief and mild
> To Golgothas a crippled child
> Often has borne for ruined years
> Watered by no angelic tears.

Mr. Hedley Lucas, whose *See You a City* has already been noticed in these pages, has now published another book of poems, *As Beauty Comes* (The Favil Press, 3s. 6d.). He is a maker of cameos, carved in half-a-dozen or, at most, a dozen lines. He seems to be inspired by two influences, the ever insistent beauty of Nature, and by Shelley's words "O world! O life! O time!"

The poet with whom Mr. Lucas displays the greatest affinity is, I think, Blake. He too has touches of obscure simplicity.

Here is one of Mr. Lucas's poems, "Like to a Tree":

> Like to a tree am I
> Lifting responsive head
> Unto a changeful sky,
> By some high challenge led.
> Now stirred by deepest glow,
> Then by a slender shower,
> And winds as when they blow
> To make a fickle hour.
> And as a tree can sense
> The infinite of moods
> So this my soul intense
> Exults and dreams and broods.

The critical notices by Lascelles Abercrombie, Richard Church, THE POETRY REVIEW, *The Times Literary Supplement*, etc., of Mr. Edward Ellul's *Merry-Go-Round* showed that a new and whimsically original

poet had swum into our ken. And his *The Primrose Path* (Oscar F. Boehringer, 3s. 6d.) confirms this view. His Muse is of the authentic lineage, but she is also a saucy baggage. Or else Puck is constantly jogging her elbow.

Here, for instance, are some of Mr. Ellul's meditations as he munches a cabbage.

> " How this coarse vegetable lags far behind
> In the display of conscious will or whim !
>
> * * * * *
>
> My pride thereby is nourished too, until
> I ponder how my body's system is
> Subservient to the metamorphosis
> Of cabbage into flesh and higher still
> As the ex-vegetable, along this track,
> Clambers to immortality on my back."

Or again, in another poem,

> " How of me have I hitherto been miser,
> Yahoo, arch-pessimist, who've had my visions
> Of angels only in their moulting-time ! "

In a quite different mood he describes a statuette of a dancing girl.

> " Grace of bough bowing,
> Swish of bush astir,
> Rustling lithe of tipsy vine
> Are exiled in her
> Whose shape anchored in stone
> Flows free in fluctuant gesture."

Note here how the image conveyed by " anchored " is carried on in the last line.

I am told that Mr. Ellul is an admirer of that little mutual-admiration group of poets who, partly by the " boosting " of them by their political Left-Wing sympathisers, are constantly in the public eye. Indeed, one of Mr. Ellul's poems looks rather like an imitation of the best-advertised of this clique, Cockney-rhymes—" Monte Carlo—St. Malo "—included, the one whom Mr. Evelyn Waugh recently stigmatized in *The Spectator* as " a public bore." Mr. Ellul's attitude, if I am rightly informed, puzzles me, for the coterie is conspicuously deficient in his gifts of wit and humour. The poem is not a parody. If Mr. Ellul took to parody he would be dangerous. Incidentally, as I have mentioned Evelyn Waugh, I may say that Mr. Ellul seems to me to be his nearest literary affinity.

In the January 1937 number of this Review I dealt with the poems of Mr. Thomas Thornely, an elderly Cambridge don, who combines wit and wisdom, humour and learning, to an unusual degree. A little

later I had the pleasure of reading them before The Poetry Society. Since then these poems have been among my bed-side books, which range from " Alice " to Augustine Birrell and from P. G. Wodehouse to T. H. Huxley, and Mr. Thornely is not out of place anywhere in this somewhat varied collection. It is astonishing that he, who has received high praise from such men as Masefield, Squire, Herbert Palmer, de la Mare, Hugh Walpole, etc, and from sundry great journals, is not more widely read.

He has now issued, through Heffer of Cambridge, *The Collected Verse of Thomas Thornely*. He has made revisions, excisions, and additions. I have not yet noted all the changes, but I observe that of his *Libellous Limericks* five have been cast out. I would have voted for the retention of one of these.

Messrs. Heffer may be congratulated on issuing a very presentable book. And " presentable " is in every way the appropriate word. For the volume would be an acceptable gift to any reader of poetry, since it contains something for nearly every taste, (except the taste for uncouth unintelligibility and pseudo-profundity), ranging, as it does, from witty epigrams, impudently amusing lampoons, and audacious limericks, to movingly eloquent poems of a high order. *Floreat !*

EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

NEW VERSE : ANTHOLOGIES : BIOGRAPHY.

Anything chosen by Mr. de la Mare is sure to be a jewel of its kind. The aim of this unusual and beautiful anthology, *Behold, This Dreamer !* (Faber and Faber, 21s.) is to cover that part of life and experience " spent . . . on the borderland of consciousness, or on its further outskirts, or beyond them " . . . and includes poems and passages on all subjects relative to this : " Of Reverie, Night, Dream, Love-Dreams, Nightmare, Death, the Unconscious, the Imagination, Divination, the Artist, and Kindred Subjects," as the sub-title says. Besides the magic of the chosen pieces—and Mr. de la Mare has dived into innumerable enchanted depths to secure his luminous grains of sand—there is a long introductory preface justifying each section of the book, of which it is a valuable and integral part. Who else can write with such sweet reasonableness upon those delicate perceptions and atmospheres, which a hard breath or touch would destroy? Besides the pearls aforesaid he has searched in his own mind and brought to the surface things like those organisms swimming under water at a pressure almost insupportable to a diver's endurance and yet so frail when exposed to the air that a jar may make them collapse. There is only one jar here, and that is the design of the frontispiece, one that seems wholly out of keeping with the delicate delights of the book.

Messrs. Macmillan provide for themselves and readers a rival to

their *Golden Treasury* in *A New Treasury of English Verse* (6s.) which runs to six hundred pages of small type, and, in spite of the title, includes poems by American poets such as Longfellow, Whitman, and Poe. Mr. Guy Boas, the compiler, has devoted the greater space to poetry from Chaucer to Swinburne, but supplements Palgrave in a fifth part devoted to modern verse with single examples of the contemporary trinity—C. Day Lewis, W. H. Auden, and Stephen Spender. It is good to see Housman take his place amongst the immortals with a selection of four of his finest lyrics and in particular we note the larger selections from such established poets as Byron, Keats and Tennyson, who are usually represented too briefly in modern anthologies but fully represented in Palgrave, and we are inclined to admit that every poem in this book is ripe and ready to be reaped.

The same ground is covered by E. V. Parker, M.C. in *The Poets' Company* (Longman's 3s. 6d.), offering a selection of one hundred and eleven poets of the XIVth Century down to Roy Cambell, Auden, and Spender, with concise notes on the galaxy of poets assembled. As before we again agree with Mr. Parker, who claims in justification for his selection that " a perfect poem is a marvel of expression " and that " poetry lives from age to age. Words penned centuries ago can inspire men to live more abundantly today, and generation by generation the work of the poets goes on in helping to mould the character of our race," adding most emphatically, that " poetry is an essential ingredient in our daily life. Without it we cannot render the service to the community that can satisfy us, but must allow our fineness of perception to be blunted in an age of whirring machines—an age so complex that it calls ever more insistently for high mounting courage and generosity of spirit, and for the intellectual suppleness and the imaginative sympathy that the poets have passed on to us." Mr. Parker continues his indefatigable work in *Modern Poetry* (Longman's 2s. 6d.), a short anthology from Meredith to Stephen Spender. Preventing criticism as to selection, he states boldly that it is based on personal likings. It certainly displays the range and variety of modern work and will be most useful to the discerning reader eager to trace the influences on present day successors to more established contemporaries presented in this admirable volume.

'It is often said that England excels in lyric poetry and in *A Century of Lyrics* 1550-1650 (Edward Arnold, 2s. 3d.), D. C. Whimster has made a fine selection, including lyrics not known to the general reader by poets such as Donne and Herbert. He gives an essential introduction that briefly surveys the historical condition of the times and notes to each lyric that are interesting and not merely academic. A complementary volume to these anthologies is part two of *The Narrative Muse* (Humphrey Milford 2s.) compiled by V. H. Collins and H. A. Treble. It contains poems of twelve established English poets and appears to be designed for school use but the general reader will find it another ripe collection.

In his able introductory essay to *The Sacred Fire* (Routledge and Sons, 7s. 6d.), another anthology which covers the same period as *The Poets' Company*, Mr. William Bower Honey, the compiler, says: "This choice of poems, then, has been made in the belief that poetry is a state to which impassioned writing of many kinds can attain, that there have been poets in every age to tend its sacred fire, and that each movement is to be judged by its own standard in regard not only to its choice of practical subject matter but also to its special order of technical accomplishment." Rejecting the idea of a single standard for all English poetry, he has adopted the novel plan of arrangement under the particular poetic movement of the period, thus, as an example, Group XVII—Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Browning, Christina Rossetti, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, is followed by Group XVIII—Morris, Bridges, Hopkins, Meredith; but he has obviously set himself a difficult task that is open to criticism; the publishers are justified, however, in claiming that "this is not a mere compilation of 'accepted' classics, but critical, selective and short enough to be read through as a well-proportioned book." The collection is most carefully annotated and goes far to demonstrate the several phases of our incomparable English poets and their beauty and integrity and the compiler's own definition of poetry and the creative value that this implies.

The inspector of Papuan schools has recently asked permission to include certain POETRY REVIEW poems in an anthology to be distributed, as an experiment to mission schools in Papua where there is, as yet, no poetry in use. Incidentally we have received an anthology—*Brave Young Singers* (Melbourne and Oxford University Press, 2s. 6d.)—of verse by children of from six to seventeen years of age who are pupils of the correspondence schools of Western Australia. These schools, which serve the needs of a sparse population scattered over an area of approximately one million square miles, "exploit to the fullest possible extent those avenues of self-expression which lead to the enrichment of the emotional and intellectual life, and the fuller developement of the personality," and in order to develop a love of poetry they supply suitable books of poems and give elementary instruction in voice production and the technique of verse making, those pupils who show more than ordinary ability receiving special attention. The verse produced is interesting and occasionally of a high standard, amply justifying the efforts of the Australian Council for Educational Research. The work of more mature students, this time of the City Literary Institute of London, is contained in *Playing with Verse* an anthology of poems grave and gay. "It gives," says Mr. Masefield in the foreword, "a just impression of the student of modern days: it shows how the young women and men of this time think and feel. The work is without affectation, pose or obscurity." We join with the Poet Laureate in his hope that there may be peace and that we see more developed work next year.

An anthology confined to those who pass a religious rather than a political test is today somewhat rare. It is a pity that the present editor of the late Louise Guiney's work *Recusant Poets* (Sheed and Ward 18s.) should have chosen a title which is misleading unless the reader is prepared to accept the explanation offered in the introduction. The Act commanding attendance on pain of heavy fines at the reformed church service was passed in 1559, but this date is only a milestone, albeit an important one, in the long struggle which began with Sir Thomas More's tragic death in defence of intellectual freedom and ended only with the last regretful hopes of the scattered followers of the Chevalier, and the Act of Emancipation of 1829, a period of nearly three hundred years.

According itself the chronological licence which the title would seem to preclude the book opens with the almost Chaucerian humour of Sir Thomas More. His "two short ballettes made for hys pastime while he was prisoner in the tower of London," "Lewis the Lost Lover" and "Davy the Dicer," in which he thanks Lady Lucke for giving him again the time for making 'rymes,' are full of the personality, unsoured by adversity, of the man who was about to face death for his opinion. With Surrey we are on less sure ground. It is difficult to see why the brawling earl, though a soldier of distinction and a poet whose name, coupled with that of Wyatt, has a very definite place in English letters, should be included in an anthology devoted to those who suffered persecution, privation, exile, the rack and death for their religion. The truth is that there was no room in England for two men such as Surrey and Somerset.

The most considerable poet with an uncontestable right to a place in this collection is the unhappy Southwell, thirteen times "most cruelly tortured," in Cecil's own words, racked and hung up by the wrists, notwithstanding which he would not even disclose the colour of his horse. It is perhaps unfortunate that *The Burning Babe* the best known of Southwell's poems should not have been printed, the editor in a note suggesting that Ben Jonson's admiration for such a late sixteenth century conceit is not to the taste of the modern reader. Surely most anthologies of today prove by its inclusion that Ben's critical faculty was not at fault.

The book concludes with two poets who seem strangely out of place in such a work. That extraordinary character William Alabaster, the Cambridge scholar who was chaplain to the Earl of Essex on the famous Cadiz expedition indeed gave up his living and a marriage engagement on his sudden conversion to the faith. But time seems to have matured his outlook, for after many escapes from prison and a good deal of manœuvring with both sides he married the widowed mother of Robert Fludd, the alchemist, and remained in the Church of England. Ben Jonson was arraigned before the London Consistory Court for habitual absence from divine service. The author of *Volpone* however, knew how to turn tragedy into comedy. Judges were

appointed to discuss matters of religion with the poet and after bi-weekly conferences the matter seems to have been dropped. This book is valuable chiefly perhaps for the varied historical matter of its prefaces to the work of each poet.

Australia is justly proud of Robert D. Fitzgerald as her acclaimed poet. He won the Australian 150th anniversary competition with his "Essay on Memory," and this and other poems are included in the volume *Moonlight Acre* (Melbourne U.P., Humphrey Milford, 4s. 6d.). Mr. Fitzgerald's work is conspicuous for its vigour of thought matched by beauty and strength of diction. He crystallizes these into poems and passages of lyrical intensity, which strung together upon each theme have the sustained force of an epic. The fine handling of his imagery and rhyme remind one often of Roy Campbell, though the outlook of the two Dominion poets differs greatly, Mr. Fitzgerald seldom resorting to satire. He records appreciatively, significantly, the rich stirrings of a new land, while his own philosophy of life adds zest to his findings and wisdom to his surmises. These are admirably shown in the following lines from "Essay on Memory":

> Who sees this time all edged about with wars
> like tiny points of fire along the rim,
> stretching to suns then sinking back to stars,
> must hold heart-close his love to speak for him
> and be his challenge to those rigorous teeth
> that devour all, the answer of his faith—
> which is towards the green-burst of new Spring,
> leaf-revelry and flower-strewn roistering,
> life-joy and the dear miracle of increase.
> Yet who stares forward through the shimmer of peace,
> noon-heavy over valleys soaked in health,
> and, baulked of sight beyond this burgeoning wealth,
> finds only tremor-tapestry, hung haze,
> will watch, adread, for the first beaconing blaze.
> Or if the only smoke that, serpentine,
> encoil the land be stubble-fires that twine
> ribbons of incense round a harvest-feast,
> still must one fear be troublous, one at least—
> a vision of changed scene wherein smokes, black,
> crawl venomous from a Gorgon chimney-stack,
> with, deep below, all foreign to our ken,
> strange engines and strange customs and strange men!

There is something of the same lyrical intensity and sustained power in the poems of Reginald C. Eva: *The Unicorn* (Combridges, 1s.), though his idiom is not so vividly alive. The title poem gives the key to Mr. Eva's underlying belief in the ultimate Goodness:

In pride he roamed—the ancient legends tell—
A beast of fearful beauty, spurned the ground
Swifter than swiftest horse, for harrying hound
Too terrible. His spirit none might quell,
Save that a virgin, naked, pure and fair,
Strong in her unadornéd loveliness,
Sought his sequestered haunt and waited there
Unarmed, alone. Then, at her call, the flame
Of his fierce spirit died, in gentleness
Submissive to her soft caress he came.
So Man—a creature by commingling born
Of heaven and hell—roams, like the unicorn
Intractable, a beast that naught shall tame
Save only Love in utter nakedness.

To Artemis (Daniel) is evocative in more ways than one. In the images of the old myths and in their mystical blending of one personality with another, Alice M. Knight finds a language for her own heart, though she also uses a more direct method of expression. Each is effective in its own way. Different again and very striking is a poem called " Afterwards," giving an unusual interpretation of the raising of Jairus' daughter :

" Talitha Cumi " . . . once that low voice rang
Across my heart-strings, and those eyes divine
Met mine, in that unutterable look,
And I arose. . . . What else was there to do ? . . .

And now, Jairus ?—You loved me—in your way—
I died of slow starvation in your house ;
To lure me back, you brought the living Lord.
And now, Jairus ?—He brought me back, not you ;
The bird you caged, that broke its mortal bars,
Returned not to your call. You brought the Lord
To lure me back—I came to Him, not you.

Now He is gone, and only you remain.
Your hungry love needs still its daily food.
I feed you as I feed the starving poor,
But free of you, I wait upon the Lord.

Vere Latham Baillieu has visited many places and sketched her impressions delicately in *Harbour Jewels and Other Poems* (Favil Press, 3s. 6d). Her eye is mostly content to catch the surface of things and is a careful and charming photographer, as in " Lascars " :

Watch the Lascars with bare-foot grace
Tying the awning in its place,
Clinging with cat-like certainty
With naught betwext them and the sea !

Flapping against an azure sky,
Their bright tunics, of deeper dye,
Caught at the waist, in contrast bright,
With knotted scarf—a frayed delight.

And on each shining dusky head,
A turbanned cap, tomato-red,
Oft centred with embroidery
Of Asiatic artistry.

Kenneth Allott's *Poems* (Hogarth Press, 5s.) are distinguished by their clear technique and skill in searching out unusual aspects and images—a skill marred by his selection of the morbid and macabre. Yet the sense of poetry is there trying to make itself felt and sometimes succeeding, notably in " Patch " :

Caught into a brown study with the stars
To-night the foreign bodies of the hills,
As innocent of every care
As the old lovers in the garden were,
Shrug at our vehement blood :
The wind clamps the ice on the random fells.

To-morrow we may rub our eyes and cry,
The livestock perish in the floods,
The timepiece cease to item in the weeds,
And one of us be sent incognito
Beyond the last peak and the flurried snow,
And no philosopher discover why.

Meanwhile the timbers creak and the lake blows white
Against the lost circumference of the shore,
Yet like the comfort of the Israelite
Even the wolvish pines to-night
Queerly affirm as more than rumour
The meticulous sweetness of the indifferent year.

C. Wrey Gardiner is also a nature poet (*Cold Moon*, Channing Press, 2s. 6d.), and one who observes and records meticulously, charging his lines to their utmost verbal capacity till the picture is strikingly reproduced. Yet in some of the simpler pieces the well-pondered philosophy and sensitive feeling of the poet show more clearly. There is a truth in " Poetry " that many will appreciate :

No bubble streaked with rainbow light
Above disasters rising high
To splendid empires out of sight
Can float more easily than I

When in a world soiled still
By the red gleam in human eyes
I live enchanted by the thrill
Of Beauty's light that never dies.

Worthless your words they say again
To build a house, to pay for war.
They cannot pass beyond the pain,
Or see an ever open door.

The author of *Beating Shoes*, W. H. Coates (Heath Cranton, 2s. 6d.), tells us in a brave brief sentence that he has been blind nearly all his life but that the other senses are enlarged in compensation. The title of the book therefore has the significance of sound as a dominating factor, and the poems are "a complex of touch, sound and smell," though one would not have guessed that outward vision was lacking. Mr. Coates paints the countryside charmingly, is conscious of the invasion of mechanism, and yet accepts it as inevitable rather than rails against it. "Amenities" is a clever glance at the alterations in village life that the power-cable brings with it, while "The Basket-Makers" gives a pleasing picture of craftsmanship:

In this sub-human age are still a few
Whose craft befits a man's endeavour, pays
Love with delight and skilful hands with praise
Which weave the inward pattern into view.

Their laugh is free, an echo ringing through
The years; their willows tapping swishing raise
Unnumbered ghosts to whisper of larger days
When men were makers, called to conceive and do.

Though economic law with distant sound
Of thunder bodes defeat, they hold their post—
These last battalions of a perished host—
Whistling and unafraid, while rattling round
Their gay defence, enslaving, closing in,
Grinds in implacable siege the dead machine.

The title, *Denmark*, of a book of poems by Maurice P. Shaw (Harmony Press, 2s.) suggests that "there is something rotten," and his blunt and bludgeoning satire on existence in general confirms the suggestion. There is something Byronic in his audacity of rhyming, and much vigour of mind behind the sometimes incoherent phrasing which is in keeping with a violent onslaught.

Another book from the same Press is *The Undying Glory* by Lawrence W. Hockey. Even without the kindly recommendation of Mr. W. H.

Davies on the dust wrapper, one notices the affinity of Mr. Hockey with that poet. He uses the same simple and concise forms for his appreciative thoughts on nature, and he has a similar trick, or charm, of a concluding thought turned whimsically and unexpectedly. " Spring Laughter " sounds a delightful note :

Young Spring brought laughter one fresh morn
As I walked down a country lane ;
The sun enjoyed a joke in heaven,
And earth smiled after showers of rain.
I chuckled then to hear the laugh
Of a green woodpecker in a tree,
And a solemn horse looked over a hedge
And suddenly laughed at me !

An addition to the growing body of poetry of flight is *Night Flight* (Air Revue, 3s. 6d.) by Leonard Taylor who makes a naïve apology " for producing in 1939 a book of verses which rhyme and scan and are intelligible." His subjects range from a eulogy of Amy Johnson to " The Alderman looks Up and Back,"

My Aldermanic coach is old,
And I am fifty, fat and proud ;
But once I looped and spun and rolled
With lads like you above the cloud.

Our stalling speed was eighty then
And England looked like stalling too,
But England finds her Englishmen
To see the hour of danger through.

My Aldermanic robes are new,
And yet I feel but half as proud
As when I wore my Air Force blue,
And climbed above a cirrus cloud.

This volume should be particularly welcomed by flying men who appreciate lively verse on many phases of their adventurous career.

The Cambridge University Press has published the text of the Leslie Stephen lecture for 1937 given by Prof. Dover Wilson. Taking as his subject : *Leslie Stephen and Matthew Arnold as Critics of Wordsworth* (2s. 6d.), he makes clear in his masterly manner how Leslie Stephen really understood and recognized the large underlying philosophy of Wordsworth better than Matthew Arnold to whom Wordsworth's " reality " was his poetry and his philosophy " the illusion."

The Taylor family of *The Taylors of Ongar* (Heffer, 10s. 6d.) is fortunate in its biographer, Doris Mary Armitage, a great-great niece of Anne and Jane. Not only does she describe the family as a whole, with their environments and their wanderings, but she afterwards takes them one by one and gives a more detailed portrait and study of each. The extraordinarily gifted and industrious members all took a share in the father's art, that of engraving, and he taught them all subjects, including the sciences of astronomy and geology. He also took an active part in religious life as a dissenting minister. Among other things it is of peculiar interest to note how a hundred years ago people lived in constant dread of a French Invasion; the inhabitants of Colchester were even evacuated on one occasion. As is the case with other artists, Jane and Anne Taylor are not remembered for their professional work but for the poems they wrote in their spare time. "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and the poems with a moral ending like "The Little Fish that would not Do as it was Bid" were the common property of one generation, the nursery "classics" of another, and the general butt of all the parodists, from Lewis Carroll to Hilaire Belloc.

After her book of Mary Shelley last year Miss Glynn Grylls has now given us a study of Claire Clairmont, mother of Byron's Allegra (John Murray 10s. 6d.). If fewer people read the poetry of Byron and Shelley today the story of their lives still finds a wide public and makes much better reading than current fiction. Up to the death of Shelley the story of Claire Clairmont is well known owing to her complete absorption in their household. In fact how to be rid of the poor girl who had once been so useful a companion—she could speak French—in the midnight flight from the Godwin house in Skinner Street, was one of the Shelleys' major problems. The romantic excitement of eloping and the strains and difficulties of everyday life are very different. So Mary can write later "give me a garden and absentia Claria." But the Shelleys were far too good natured ever to make Claire really unwelcome. Her determination to know Byron was decided on when she was living alone at Lynmouth, such a romantic place with its roaring waters and hooting owls. But Claire with her vivacity and love of excitement wanted something more than that. So she sets about the business of introducing herself to the famous poet and like many another determined woman, succeeds.

Much has been written about the Allegra episode. As Miss Glynn Grylls is careful to point out, Byron is not guilty of wilfully desiring to endanger the child's health. At the same time it is difficult not to blame him for at least carelessness in the ensuing tragedy. But that the great Lord Byron should ever stoop to occupy himself with the details of a child's comfort, even his own, is of course, inconceivable. It seems unfortunate that the advantages of Byron's interest and protection should have been so exaggerated by everybody concerned.

The picture of those few short years, in which the eighteen months old baby is taken from her mother, grows up to wander about Byron's palace in Venice with the monkey and the crow, occasionally petted by La Fornarina, rescued by the busybody Mrs. Hoppner, who merely wanted a finger in the Byron pie and never liked her charge, culminating in the tragedy in the convent at Bagnacavallo where typhus quickly cut short that pathetic unwanted life, is one of the most moving things in the book.

The death of Allegra was a turning point in the life of Claire. After that she was a woman although only twenty. The extreme youth, in fact, of all these people so mature in their actions, is incredible. With the death of Shelley the whole circle of friends breaks up and thereafter her life takes its way to lesser known paths. She went to her brother in Vienna, but could not be happy in that grey northern city after the bright skies of Italy and she fled again to the ultima Thule of Moscow, determined to cauterize the broken tissues of her memories in the barbarian horrors of Russian society. From 1828 when she returned to London till her death at 91 in 1879 in Florence there is only a tale of restless travelling to tell, making a difficult living as a governess. Her mind was as acute though, and her courage never left her. An old woman, she wrote to Trelawny, " My own firm conviction is that our home is beyond the stars, not beneath them."

Miss Glynn Grylls has brought Claire to life, the girl with all her enthusiastic vivacity and rather tiresome love of continual excitement, and the woman embittered by the tragedy not so much of the one love of a life time thrown away on a worthless object, but of the useless and painful sacrifice of Allegra, the only consolation in her unhappiness and humiliation. In this book we live again with those extraordinary youthful romantics who, whether they were bringing babies into the world, undertaking long and uncomfortable journeys, hunted for debt or distraught with sorrow, never let a day pass without reading or music, and the consolations of a wild and witty conversation. They loved liberty and the liberal life, and they earned it.

In the water-colour sketch by Westall a tall female in Turkish trousers leans disconsolately against an open door, her back turned to the lateen-rigged ship sailing away over the blue waters of the Mediterranean. No better frontispiece could have been chosen for the collection of hitherto unpublished letters written by women *To Lord Byron* (John Murray, 12s. 6d.). For Byron was the sort of man who sailed away with considerable ingenuity from the difficulties and tiresome consequences of that passionate if transitory adoration which no woman he met could resist. So in nearly every case the correspondence begins with an effusion of trifling, if amusing details and ends in a resentful *cri du coeur* such as that of Caroline Lamb's " Oh God, can you give me up if I am so dear? " That he could do so with extreme ease is evident from the comparatively short period which

elapses from the date of the first letter in 1809 to the last in November 1823. During these fourteen years thirteen women threw themselves without restraint at Byron. What must strike the reader at once is the extraordinary catholicity of his taste, or was it merely that he was unable ever to refrain from lighting that flame in a woman's eyes which is so easy to some men? Between the dismissal of the lively Welsh housemaid at Newstead, Susan Vaughan, and the affair with the flighty but fascinating Caroline Lamb there is only a month or two. Of the rest Claire Clairmont is the best known. But the demi-mondaine Hariette Wilson and the Drury Lane actress Susan Boyce are characters adding much to the variety of this gallery of portraits. With its commentary by "George Paston"—the late Miss E. M. Symonds—and Mr. Peter Quennell this book gives us the rich flavour and variety of an art that Lord Byron could inspire to the *n*th degree.

In the *Portrait of Stella Benson* by R. Ellis Roberts (Macmillan 15s.), a large picture in oils where the details are somewhat sketchily brushed in after the delicate precision of Miss Glynn Grylls' masterly etching, we see the rebel of a hundred years later. Stella Benson, a niece of Mary Cholmondeley, author of *Red Pottage*, soon broke away from her sheltered life and made of "Living Alone" something more than the title of a book, the symbol of her spiritual strength. Her work in literature and in life in all its variety is too well known to need any discussion here. She was careful to select only a very small number of poems to be published in one volume in the event of her death. She was too great an artist not to reject all but her best work. In the preface we are told this book "does not profess to do other than give the author's impression of his friend, the woman portrayed." The reader finds too often that Mr. Ellis Roberts' own views are occupying his attention instead of "the woman portrayed."

The first paragraph of the last chapter in Mr. Douglas Sladen's discursive record of *My Long Life* (Hutchinson and Co., 12s. 6d.) associates that most active and genial octogenarian with poetry. *Frithjof and Ingebjorg*, my first book, was a volume of poetry published by Kegan Paul, uniform with their editions of Tennyson, in 1882. *Australian Lyrics* and *A Poetry of Exiles* were paper bound books published in Melbourne and Sydney in 1882 and 1883. *A Summer Christmas*, 1884, and *In Cornwall, and Across the Sea*, 1885, *Edward the Black Prince*, 1886, and *The Spanish Armada*, were all volumes of poetry published by Griffith Farran and Co., a firm now extinct, in which an Oxford friend of mine was a partner. *Edward the Black Prince* brought me an autographed letter of approval from Tennyson. *The Spanish Armada* was written for and recited at the Plymouth celebration of the Tercentenary of the Destruction of the Spanish Armada. The publication of all these books had been at my expense." This is not an unusual begining

but it laid the foundations and really directed Mr. Sladen's subsequent career because in 1888 he got his first commission which was to edit an anthology of Australian poets for William Sharp's admirable *Canterbury Poets*, for which Mr. Sladen received twenty-five pounds and had the gratification of knowing that his compilation was a great success, selling 20,000 copies in the first year ; moreover it introduced him to Eric Mackay and his adopted daughter, Marie Corelli, who in their turn laid the foundations of the literary friendships that Douglas Sladen subsequently developed so widely and charmingly and of which this gossipy biography is largely concerned. He also obtained commissions for other anthologies of Australian poets and of younger American poets which set him off on his travels, out of which developed his early and very successful prose books on Japan and a large part of the rest of the world but which weaned him from verse and made it unnecessary for him to publish any more books at his own expense. In consequence Douglas Sladen as a poet fades into the background, but his intimate, friendly associations with the poets of his period developed and became a source of great satisfaction to him, culminating in the successful efforts he made to get Adam Lindsay Gordon a monument in Westminster Abbey. It will be remembered that this bust was done by Lady Kennet and unveiled by the present king in 1934, a remarkable achievement of our indefatigable friend with his great zest for life and still greater sense of loyalty.

William Wordsworth of Rydal Mount, by Frederika Beatty, of New York (J. M. Dent and Sons, 15s.) is a very fully annotated (each chapter has about two hundred notes and references attached to it) account of the poet and his friends during his later years, excellently illustrated by photographs. It might be taken as supplying the authentic material of fact, quotation and reference, supporting and amplifying Helen Ashton's brilliant *William and Dorothy* recently published ; a valuable presentation of the later Wordsworth in particular, and his friends and relations, correcting in some respects the impression of him conveyed by his official biographer and nephew, Dr. Wordsworth, Dean of Westminster. Based on the evidence of contemporaries of various degree and station, including some of the local peasantry, Wordsworth is shown a more attractive personality with an exceptional capacity for making friends than recent volumes dealing with him have suggested.

" A hundred years have passed since the death (from consumption at the age of thirty-six) of W. M. Praed, but this [*A Poet in Parliament*, John Murray, 12s. 6d.] is the first attempt at a full length biography of one who, in his light vein, was probably our most accomplished political satirist, and who has never been equalled as a writer of graceful *vers de société*." In the pages following Mr. Derek Hudson justifies

these first lines of the preface to a fascinating and leisurely biography. It is, of course, Praed's poetry that chiefly concerns us, and Mr. Hudson recognizes that—" his was the versatility that flows naturally from an active personality. But more striking than his variety is the mastery of rhythm and metre which he brought to bear on his work, and which did so much to make an artistic success out of small material. . . . It cannot be said that Praed was greatly influenced by the work of other and more important poets: his early Etonian efforts may show a touch of Crabbe's sententiousness, and his burlesque romances have a flavour of Scott and Byron ; but for his most characteristic pieces he need offer no acknowledgement. As for his own position, it seems to lie somewhere between Matthew Prior and Thomas Hood; he is almost the equal of the former, and, though he cannot compete with the latter as a serious poet, he has the advantage of Hood in that mixed style which Professor Saintsbury has called ' wholly blended and tempered humour and pathos '." Mr. Hudson continues, " We have said that the characteristics of Praed's verses are their wit and perfection of their form, but they have other virtues of a different sort : love of the home and family life ; and intense and always kindly interest in his fellow men ; a very noticeable purity of thought and expression, entirely devoid of priggishness." Quiller Couch has recognized Praed's " Horatian touches," and one other equally telling comparison Mr. Hudson considers worthy of notice—" ' If Byron is the Rubens, Praed is the Watteau of English poetry,' said a *Times* reviewer in 1864, and the comparison is not uninteresting: Praed and Watteau both suffered under the burden of ill-health—they died of consumption at the same age—and both had a talent for graceful design in the depicting of scenes of life and gaiety." But we have another link with Praed, the centenary of whose death will be commemorated by a special meeting July 14th—the President of The Poetry Society being a grandson of Praed's younger sister and confidant Susan, Lady Young.

Songs of the Sea (P.T., 2s. 6d.) would have pleased Kipling and will appeal to a much wider circle than purely literary verse does. They are by an ex-engineer-officer of the mercantile marine, plangent of the sea, racy, idiomatic, direct, metrical, true to the spirit that creates sea chanties. Mr. Sydney Brand out-sails and out-sings a Queen Mary full of tortuous modern versifiers who pass as poets to-day.

MR. TERENCE HEYWOOD replies to MR. MACCALLUM-SMITH.

Sir,—In reply to Mr. MacCallum-Smith, I must first admit that I am no longer in doubt about the value of languages for a critic. I also agree that in my letter (hurried though it was) in the March number I ought to have avoided the cliché " sweeping generalization " (just as he perhaps might have avoided such hackneyed phrases as " storm in a tea-cup " and " esteemed magazine ") ; that, however, is but petty

quibbling. I deplore, too, the sentence in which I half suggested that a poet's absence from certain anthologies reflects on his merit. But his assertion that I take a " narrow view of poetry " is intolerable. It is just because I recognize the virtues of many kinds of modern poetry that I challenge his rather fatalistic statement that English poetry is about to decline rapidly.

Why should it decline? " Because," according to Mr. Smith, " that admirable class of versifiers encouraged by THE POETRY REVIEW are more and more imitating the modernists in style and conception." But I am concerned with *poets* not versifiers, with genius not mediocrity. We will suppose, however, that he means " fairly good minor poets " (though why limit them to one magazine?). " If," he says, " the minors give way, however negligibly to the influence of the experimentalist, poetry *must decline*." When, for example, they did so in the early seventeenth century, lyrical poetry did not decline, it only changed. It is not the artist's business to bother about a continuous literary decorum. Let him ignore the die-hard traditionist who, as we all know, would cramp him, who doesn't want works that " fan fresh our wits with wonder," and is too blinded by prejudice to judge them. If we must choose between the extremes of traditionalism and of experiment, then let us have the latter, which excludes nothing but repetition and may result in something big. (The traditionist will often do lip-service to Greek art, forgetting that its spirit was above all adventurous, that " The most un-Greek thing we can do is to copy the Greeks.") But I deny that we are forced to choose. And lest it should be thought that I advocate novelty for the sake of novelty, I need only refer anyone interested to my article *Contemporaneity and Escape*, in the March number of last year.

I refuse to drag Scotland into discussion. The " peculiar cycle " Mr. Smith mentioned may be very interesting, but an eclipse of English poetry is not predictable like an eclipse of the moon. I have not denied that our poetry may shortly decline. I have only challenged Mr. Smith to produce his evidence.

He points to an obvious deterioration in Day Lewis, which shows nothing more than that a single poet is falling off. " Falling back upon himself just as Mr. Spender and others," is how Mr. Smith puts it. Apparently he dislikes Spender's fine austere poetry. If so, he is missing something important. And who are the " others "?

His judgment on the few other poets he mentions helps to refute rather than support his decline theory. Eliot " has proceeded to a finer integration," Auden " is finding himself," Prokosch and Whistler are satisfying.

He rather bossily orders me to read *Four Walls* on my knees. I had already read it, and have recently done so again. He takes of Whistler as belonging to " the new English school." Where is the newness in Whistler? He is young, I know, but he and his like are no more new than are the artists who exhibit at the Royal Academy.

There may be good things, of course, in both groups, but the discerning critic does not look to either for the vital art of to-day. Both groups have rich, influential and respectable patrons, and are therefore hard to assail. (The way many modernists have tried has only tended to make the cliques more hostile and watertight than ever.) I hold it unfortunate that one poet (Whistler), no better and no worse than many others, should have been singled out and overrated.

Prokosch? Though formerly I denied that he was very good (N.B. the "very"), I now admit that in some poems he is. But here again it is the arbitrary, indiscriminate disposal of praise that I deplore. Prokosch, because he happens to have come to England, to have been taken up by *New Verse*, *The Year's Poetry* and even represented in *Poems of To-day*, has become in England one of the most read of American poets. And yet he is far smaller in statute than many other Americans who are little or entirely unknown over here. Surely Mr. Smith would not really attempt to pit the whole of modern English and American poetry against the Scottish, and expect his compatriots to come out victorious?

A generalization, even about English poetry, to be useful at all would have to be supported by far more names than Mr. Smith mentions. One of your reviewers in the last number comes nearer the truth when he states that, because of its diversity, "it is quite impossible to generalize about 'modern' poetry." But if Mr. Smith really wishes to persist with his decline theory, and if anyone thinks the discussion worth continuing, then I am willing to make a list of strictly English poets (even avoiding Welshmen and Irishmen if he so desires) of different schools or types, who—if they continue to write as well as at present—seem likely to prevent a decline. But the list would be long, and would be compiled with the help of over a dozen periodicals in Great Britain and U.S.A. (for some of our younger poets have not yet produced books or appeared in anthologies). And Mr. Smith would be expected to indicate (mentioning names) what the hypothetical decline is supposed to be from. I doubt, however, if it would be worth while, for it seems that Mr. Smith's taste is not sufficiently catholic: he would probably "misunderstand the real power and beauty" of much of the work, just as he did Eliot's.

Yours, etc., TERENCE HEYWOOD.

SIR,—All the points raised by Mr. Heywood in the letter published in this month's issue can be best answered by Mr. Heywood himself. This can be accomplished if he will answer the following point:

How does he measure, or, to be more correct, judge genius?

I do not put this question to avoid the many just points raised by Mr. Heywood, but I feel that his answer will settle all differences without any further comment from me.

Yours, etc., MACCALLUM-SMITH.

THE POET'S FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

I am very much pleased with all my three selections this time. They are all short lyrics of a definite quality and individuality and they represent the high water mark of young writers whose work we have come to appreciate for its vivid freshness and natural skill. Some fine, clear, strong passages will be found in each of these premium poems by C. HARVEY, (Goodmayes); RACHEL E. BOULTON, (Winscombe); and E. CURT PETERS, (Chalfont St. Giles).

HIGHLY COMMENDED:

Elizabeth F. Alden, Haddenham;
Marguerite Edgelow, Gerrard's Cross;
P. Eugénie Emeric, East Sheen;
I. Sutherland Groom, Clifton;
Editha Melbourne, Maidstone;
B. F. Pargiter, London, S.W.;
Juliet Peel, London, S.W.;
Violet Rawnsley, Anacapri;
Hilda M. Slade, Worthing;
Arthur Lynnford-Smith, Wanstead;
Margery Smith, Nottingham;
Margaret E. Stringer, Tipperary;
C. Woodhouse, Haslemere;

COMMENDED:

D. R. W. Carr, Ferryhill;
T. E. Casson, Ulverston;
Cloudrider, Budapest;
C. G. Dobbs, London, W.C.;
Reginald C. Eva, Hove;
Jessie B. Heard, Bristol;
Agnes MacCarthy Hickey, New York;
Pauline Huthwaite, Hawksworth, Notts;
Irene H. Lewis, Leatherhead;
Edith Mary Mann, Dovercourt
Mary More, London, W.; [Bay;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland;
Frances Paul, London, S.W.;
T. Pittaway, Frome;
Helba Baker Russell, Mauger's, France;
Dorothy Sproule, Montreal;
D. E. C. Tomlin, Diss;
Ella D. Vinall, London, W.;
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth.

The usual premium offer for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should reach "The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW, 35 Portman Square, London, W.1," by August 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.) It is essential that entrants to this competition be members of The Poetry Society or registered subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW, and that each poem bears the name and address of the author.

Mr. MacCallum Smith desires to recognize the best POETRY REVIEW poem of the year by a premium of £5. Any poem that gets published in the course of the year will be eligible for this award.

The Chattanooga Writers' Club, Chattanooga, Tennessee, announces the annual Nature Poem Contest, established by Mr. Robert Sparks Walker in memory of his wife, and called the Elberta Clark Walker Memorial Prize. A first prize of $15.00, a second prize of $10.00 and a third prize of $5.00 will be awarded the three best nature poems submitted. Each of the seven next best will be awarded a book of poems by Robert Sparks Walker entitled *When God Failed.* The poems must not exceed seventy-two lines, and must be submitted anonymously, accompanied by a sealed envelope containing the name and address of the writer inside and identified by the title of the poem written on the outside of the envelope. Only one poem may be submitted by each contestant. MSS. should reach Mrs. Cyrus Griffin Martin, 412 E. Second Street, Chattanooga, Tennessee, before November 1st.

The winner of the New York World's Fair poetry contest, for which she received $1,000, is Miss Pearl E. Levison, 23 years of age. We give an extract without comment:

(Here on island where North and
South and farthest to-morrow are
equidistant: Here connect for all
points of your travel.)

In time of snow falling: the soft snow falling
Here on grey shore of island valanced
With ancestral foam of many Atlantics:
Here on island (O connect here for
all points of your travel)
Where customary dunes are creased between
Usual grasses: here on tongue of island
With hills brown-nippled now and gradual
Valleys slumping into cold hollows overgrown
With fleshless willow and birches twitching.

The judges were: Col. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., Louis Unteymeter and William Rose Benet.

Mr. Henry Woodhouse's Merrie England buildings in which THE POETRY SOCIETY and THE POETRY REVIEW are represented, are looking very beautiful.

News has come from the Canadian Authors' Association that the Governor General's Literary Award for the best book of poetry published by a Canadian during the calendar year 1938 has gone to Kenneth Leslie for his *By Stubborn Stars* (Ryerson, Montreal; Bruce Humphries, Boston). The Governor General's Medal, given for General Literature, for Poetry, for Fiction, was instituted three years ago by Lord Tweedsmuir, himself a famous author as John Buchan, and is the only prize for literary merit given in Canada. Kenneth

Leslie is the author of two previous collections of verse, *Lowlands Low* and *Windward Rock*. Born at Pictou, Nova Scotia, in 1892, he spent his youth absorbing the traditions of his people, and his love of the sea and susceptibility to its influence are constantly apparent in his work. We have received no news of the award of the King's Gold Medal for Poetry for the above period.

The 30th Annual General Business Meeting of The Poetry Society (Incorporated) was held on May 2nd, 1939, at the Society's headquarters, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Mr. C. Oscar Gridley, J.P., Chairman of the Council, presided in the unavoidable absence of the President, Lord Kennett.

The Chairman said : The President has already stated at the Annual Birthday Dinner in February, that we have passed through a year very significant and successful in the work of The Poetry Society.

It had for its immediate practical object the cultivation of the beautiful art of reading and speaking poetry, and had greatly furthered that object in many practical ways and directions, particularly by the extension of the diction examinations which had been adopted all over the country and been found of inestimable value and encouragement by hundreds of schools and individuals.

Perhaps the most significant thing has been the combination of the long difficult search for new premises. The result is before you. This more commodious accommodation should add very greatly to the prestige and dignity of the Society. It must add, to be really justifiable, to the membership and to the activities, for considerable addition to our standing and establishment charges has now to be made, and the money to meet that has to be earned. Some contributions towards the extra expense have been received and are acknowledged in the new issue of THE POETRY REVIEW, in which some indication is also given of the extended uses of the premises.

During the past year efforts have been made to affiliate poetry societies overseas, and two new groups have been formed in British Columbia. The only new English centre that has come into being is one in Buckinghamshire, which has made a very promising beginning.

Members will have seen in THE POETRY REVIEW from time to time, characteristic references to the value to individuals of the Society and of the REVIEW. These expressions of appreciation and goodwill come in from all parts of the world, and our library circulation in the United States, Japan, and Russia in particular, has been extended, but individual membership in America has decreased. The British Council has offered co-operation in extending the circulation of THE POETRY REVIEW on the Continent, it being regarded as a most desirable and influential factor in promoting cultural relations. (Applause.)

The Annual Financial Statement presented by the Council after audit was adopted. It showed a small credit balance on the year, the chief items of revenue being slightly higher than in previous years.

The elected members of the General Council, no fresh nominations and no resignations having been received, were continued *en bloc*, namely : Mr. C. Oscar Gridley, Miss Bangay, Viscountess Buckmaster, Captain Cranmer-Byng, Hon. Phillis Coleridge, Earl of Cromer, Mr. E. Vandermere Fleming, Miss J. Huntsman, Miss F. Jordan, Sir Campbell Mitchell-Cotts, Mr. W. Marshall, Hon. Eleanour Norton, Mr. T. Weston Ramsey, Mr. C. B. L. Tennyson, together with the overseas Representatives, Mrs. Hunt Bartlett (U.S.A.) Countess van Bylandt (Holland), Mrs. Rosenthal (Portugal) Lady Tasker (India), Capt. C. E. H. Jacobs (Malaya), Mr. H. Allman-Lewis (S. America).

Messrs. Godwin and Taylor chartered accountants, were re-elected hon. auditors with thanks for past services.

Mr. W. Marshall, proposing a vote of thanks to the Chairman and other officials, spoke with deep feeling of Mr. Gridley's devotion to the Society and added that he had confidence in the suitability and success of the new premises in which that Annual Meeting was being held for the first time. It was highly desirable that everyone should know of The Poetry Society and he urged that steps should be taken towards that end. One obvious course was for members to bring in new members. Each of them should become responsible for introducing one or more new members each year.

Mr. E. Vandermere Fleming, C.B., continued the expression of grateful thanks to the Chairman, who in reply paid a warm tribute to the support of his colleagues on the Council and to the tireless attention to the Society's maintenance and development given by the Director.

At the Annual Statutory Meeting of the General Council of The Poetry Society (Incorporated) held at the Society's offices, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, on June 6th, Lord Kennet of the Dene accepted re-election as President-General, and was warmly thanked for his distinguished occupation of the office. Mr. C. Oscar Gridley, J.P., was re-elected Chairman of the Council and Mr. Charles Tennyson, Honorary Treasurer, a cordial recognition of the value of their essential services to the Society being awarded.

Miss A. R. Morison, O.B.E., awarded the Annual Rawnsley Memorial Gold Medal for the Reading of Poetry, on June 17th to June Gregory of Farnborough, with Miss Angela Lake of Hampstead as *proxime accessit* receiving the Silver Replica. There were nine candidates, and Miss Morison, in making the award, said that the standard of the readers was so excellent that she had difficulty in coming to a decision. Audibility and pitch and other technical qualities were admirable, with a beautiful cadence and delicate stresses expressed by vibrant voices, the chief faults being a disregard of rhythm and a tendency to run over lines and spoil the pattern of the poem thereby and occasionally sacrificing music to meaning. A detailed criticism of each readers' performance was given.

POETRY AND POLITICS[1]

"O qu'heureux sont ceux qui avec une liberté entière et une pente invincible de leur volonté aiment parfaitement et librement ce qu'ils sont obligés d'aimer nécessairement." (PASCAL.)

"This class struggle plays hell with your poetry." (JOHN REED.)

MOST people have the wrong idea of poetry. Addicted as they are to that kind which is called classical, they still contrive to forget the revolutionary passion of Swinburne, the avowedly didactic intentions of Vergil; and in reading Vergil or Swinburne their critical spirit sleeps, and they bring to the operation a friendliness they deny to their own contemporaries. Yet they are partly right. Not all post-war revolutionaries have sufficiently perceived the dangers of a too close alliance between the metrical expression of their thought and the new creeds which have coloured all the background of that thought. The red of revolution can be as offensive as the very red-tape it sets out to destroy. Somewhere between the two extremist views a decision must be taken, for unless we continually realize what sort of poetry theory allows we cannot condemn what we dislike. Without this *prejudice* it is impossible to be fair.

There appear to be two senses in which a poet can deliver himself over to politics. He can in a crisis allow his knowledge of effective rhythm to be used for the formation of slogans and the writing of political satire, and in other ways suspend his activity as a "pure" poet on the plea of emergency, a doubtful plea since there will always be found persons to deny that a state of emergency exists, and in any case it is not by losing his own ideals that a poet will salvage a ship wrecked by the general neglect of ideals. Or he can write "pure" poetry susceptible of political interpretation. The alternatives correspond in their own sphere to the difference between politics itself and political causes: the former is partly contained in the latter. The latter is on the right lines, the former is not.

[1] The Chancellor's Prize Essay at Oxford, 1939.

Of the former kind of poetry plenty is being written in Germany to-day, too external indeed to be anything but the rhetoric of indignation, but seemingly imbibed straight from the feeding-bottle of the new Nazi Great Mother—mother or midwife, it makes no odds. Listen to this :

> Wir Narren sind wie einsam angetreten :
> Grell schwirrte Hohn auf, gellte Schimf und Scherz,
> Wir aber glaubten. Denn da half kein Beten.
> Wir wussten nur : in uns schlug Deutschlands Herz.[1]

Narren indeed ! and this of Friedrich Ekkehard, in all the nakedness of translation :

> You who died on the ninth of November,
> You dead, we swear it to you
> That there are still many thousand fighters,
> For the third, the United German Reich.

or this charming fable of Hitler and the Little Mice who disturbed his rest :

> Fortan vergisst er sicher keinen Abend
> Der Mäuslein und bedenkt mit Brot sie labend . . .
> Und Adolf Hitler blickt herzfröhlich nieder
> Auf seine Gästè und lernt lächeln wieder.
> Jetzt braucht er mehr als nur ein Häuschen,
> Denn wir sind alle seine Mäuschen.[2]

The attitude to art in the Fascist countries is certainly incorrect. But, thank God ! it is also ridiculous, not a serious menace.

> . . . Die Kunst ist lang,
> Und kurz ist unser Leben . . .

When Hitler and Mussolini are dead, when d'Annunzio and Binding have benefited from the kindly shortness of the memory of man, all those nameless refugees, from whom is mercifully withheld a celebrity which would only single them out for destruction, will attain the praise they deserve. They will not have been without suffering. Uncertainty of publication, the absence of an audience, misrepresentation, often bodily fear are conditions which at once wither their own sympathies and by their very difference from the normal conditions of existence divide them from the understanding even of those who wish to understand them. But they will at least have no doubts of themselves. A more

complicated position obtains in Russia, demonstrating this fact above all, that we cannot consider as separate (though they are distinct) the questions of the political content permissible in a poem and of the manner of reaction of poets to the different political systems. The duty of a poet to his community is conditioned by the attitude of the community to its poet. But the present uneasy alliance between them in Russia envisages wrong definitions of both, and in so far as it has spread to this country, where artistic fashions are comparatively unbridled, will soon be dissolved.

In itself poetry is not subject to human conditions. The essence of it is preoccupied with itself, like the phoenix. But the poetic gift being situated in man suffers, even leaving out of account the destinations intended for particular poems, if it is divorced from the materials in which it resides. These materials are the stuff of human life. Thus *prima facie* politically didactic poetry appears unobjectionable. Difficulties only arise in determining the degree to which poetry may be or must be political. Little help is to be had from modern criticasters and poet-critics : they are for the most part incoherent theorisers, and as ignorant of opposition as they are incapable of discussion. All that they are able to say is that

> propaganda verse is to be condemned when the didactic is achieved at the expense of the poetic.[3]

But there is much more to be said ; as for instance that although the limitation implied by the practical subjection of art to human conditions is a source of strength, the strength does not accrue through the obedient acceptance of the limitation so much as by overcoming it. It was the difficulty of overcoming the limitation caused by the curious shape of their pediments and of composing sculptural groups to lie inside them which forced the ancient Greeks in the earliest period of classical culture to meet the whole problem of composition in sculpture and to solve it finally. Remove the actual pediments of Aegina or of the Parthenon, you condemn the sculptures to a wholly undesirable liberty. But to reason from this that the frame is the mistress of the

picture is like saying that because the steel girders of the Bodleian extension will never be taken away, the building should never have proceeded beyond their erection.

In the wider sense of politics synonymous with human life as a whole, and consequently an admirable element in poetry, Aeschylus, Euripides and Shakespeare were all political poets. But the discipline they therefore underwent (especially the two Greek poets) did not mean so much as it necessarily does in modern England. Since the speed with which successive sections of the English community received the vote began to outstrip their own leisurely attempts to fit themselves for voting, politics has ceased to be anything more than an ignorant superstition to the majority of them. Their conception of Neville Chamberlain is of a man with an umbrella, exactly as their idea of Lord Baldwin used to be limited to his pipe. This pigeon-holeing of politics could not but have its effect on the poets. But in Greece politics really did mean what went on in the city. Hence such (to us) highly controversial utterances as

> ἀλλ' ὃν πόλις στήσειε, τοῦδε χρῆ κλύειν
> καὶ σμικρὰ καὶ δίκαια καὶ τἀνάντια [4]

assumed for the Greeks the character of something much nearer the personal than political theory, partly because such remarks had all the weight of the established religion behind them. Greek Tragedy is concerned to generalize : Shakespeare on the other hand is mainly interested in the effect of anything, even public movements, on the individual sufferer ; and for politics he at least always uses a kind of symbolism. (Lear is the exception which proves both these rules.) The argument for the general view finds perfect expression in Cassandra's line καὶ τοῦτ' ἐκείνων μᾶλλον οἰκτείρω πόλυ [5] but this view is neither in itself necessarily greater nor necessarily precluded from coexisting with its opposite. In *Richard II*, if we choose to seek a solution for our troubles respecting the theory of the divine right of kings, we shall find one. But it is there worked out in the guise of a personal conflict, and may be

neglected if the characters themselves are correctly apprehended. No exception need be made for the occasional direct pronouncements on political matters found in Shakespeare and Greek Tragedy alike : on the contrary, it is only in the light of this theory that they can be understood. The truistic character of such utterances in Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides has long been criticized, as has also the banality of those speeches in Shakespeare which defend loyalty, good government, integrity and similar obviously excellent things. The reason is, no part of the audience must be antagonised. The reader of Shakespeare never feels himself cut off from the enjoyment of a phrase because his political colour is not that of the poet. The most hardened aristocracy must be moved by the condition of the mob in *Coriolanus*. The greatness of Julius Caesar does not escape even the most excitable proletarian. Yet it is well to remember that only five years ago a production of *Coriolanus* in Paris was stopped by the government because it was too " actual," just as Shakespeare's own company were prevented from reviving *Richard II*. To go outside our own literature, for ten years La Fontaine was kept out of the French Academy by rivals who drew attention to his supposedly progressive views : whatever their sincerity, the temporary success of their action points clearly to a tendency, even in an age when the majority of mankind was not politically conscious (indeed there has never been an age when it was), to assign to each individual, poet or no, his party pigeon-hole. The misunderstanding must have been there, or the argument based on it would have failed. Aristophanes used the same argument, based on the same misunderstanding, against Euripides ; and in this respect he misrepresents the poet exactly as he misrepresents the philosopher Socrates. It is a dangerous method, and not even usually accurate. After all Euripides, who regarded his rôle of poet quite definitely as a public office like that of the Priest of Dionysus, came nevertheless at last to the conclusion that politics were not his *métier*.

The misunderstanding would never have arisen if people did not generally exaggerate the intellectual content of

poetry. They do not for the most part realize that this is what they are doing, and would probably deny it if so accused, but the fact comes to light incessantly, in the very-nice-but-what-does-it-mean school of criticism, the prosaic objections to poetic figures of speech, and a thousand chance remarks. By virtue of this superstition, though the statesman, it is acknowledged, has rarely been anything but a very lame poet (dear Gladstone, alas! was no exception), the poet is commonly and erroneously imagined as a sort of super-glamorous statesman. The error is repeated in Browning's poem "I only know one poet in my life," where he says of this symbolical personage "He was the town's true master, if the town but knew."

> We had among us not so much a spy
> As a recording chief inquisitor.

Yet if, as will be seen later, the poetic method is above much of the dirty work of practical life, it is equally at once insufficient for and, in its apparent sufficiency, prejudicial to the proper statement of any problem of the mind.

> Disguised as an angel of counsel it will lead the human soul astray on false mythical paths.[8]

To what end did prose come into existence, if not for man's moments of idealism? Even Milton, who wrote of

> . . . hogs
> Who bawl for freedom in their senseless mood
> And still revolt when truth would set them free,

descended to prose for his polemics proper, and made his verse simply a comment on them, not a statement of them. But prose is not popular in the twentieth century. I believe this is the first age, and I hope it is the last, when the proverbial poverty of poets has even denied them the luxury of a prose style. Poetry puts a man into a passive state where he is no longer able to make the clear judgments which theorizing demands. Indeed, the poet himself, recollecting his emotion in order to compose it, is seldom tranquil enough to avoid the pitfalls of this same state of passivity. Yeats did not avoid them, and they produced in him both the irritating strain of political dogma which invalidates so much of his work, and an entirely uneducated

emphasis on the importance of race, which is curiously praised by at least one of his chief mourners.[7] Euripides did not avoid them, when he concentrated on showing that the humble characters in his dramas were as honest and human as the kings and princes; not realizing that playwrights choose princes and kings rather than simple shepherds for their protagonists merely because they bring with them an heightened sense of reality which οἱ βάνασοι would not bring.

If the poet is not a clear thinker, he cannot be a leader of thought. "Ideas," wrote Mr. Day Lewis, "are not material for the poetic mind till they have become commonplaces for the practical mind." Without understanding this we cannot understand the function of political satire. Satire as a *genre* can only criticize vices already known and hated. It is indeed utterly impotent of pointing the way to any kind of reform, because its statements are enforced by a kind of joke, and a joke must always depend on recognizable attributes. Satire attains its effect through a narrow circle of prejudices among its audience—worthless, conservative, nationalist prejudices. Also, it must always be very appropriate, making the obvious criticism. Thus a rich man must be made out to be miserly, a poor man extravagant; a humpback fancies himself as a lady-killer, a duchess marries a dustman. The absence of any quantity of modern satire in the sense in which Dryden and Pope were satirists is remarkable in view of post-war conditions, and has been variously explained. Perhaps the truth is that satire as I have described it demands a measure of contentment, a measure of communion between the satirist and the spirit of his age. After the war there was simply nothing to which he could give his allegiance or approval: no possible standpoint or angle of vision was supplied to him naturally from the situation itself. Every satirist is by a nature a *laudator temporis acti*: here past time was as unattractive as present, or in so far as it did contain elements deserving praise, irrevocable, possessing no remedies for present discontent. Between them the two founders of satire, Persius and Juvenal, exemplify all its

rules : Persius, the failure, because he was too immersed in the beauty of a very dead past ; and Juvenal, the success, because while looking back to the past (in his case an imaginary past) he did not expect too much from his contemporaries. The habit of retrospection is not confined to satirists. *A propos* of *Coriolanus* M. André Suarès wrote :

> Tous les grands poètes, sans aucune exception, si ce n'est au dix-neuvième siècle, ont été réactionnaires, comme on dit, également ennemis des tribuns et des pédants. C'est un fait, et on n'y peut rien. Les textes sont là, d'Homère à Baudelaire, de la Genèse à Goethe, d' Aristophane à Cervantes et d'Eschyle à Shakespeare.[8]

Where satire was written it was utterly unhelpful, like Mr. Roy Campbell's *Georgiad*. There have also been isolated attempts at purely political satire the failure of which is mostly due to the prosaic manner of their approach. Whatever is doubtful, there must be general agreement that the word " Czechoslovakia " does not fit well into a poem. The most extensive abolition of poetic diction, the most consistent application of the principle that nothing is absolutely beautiful or ugly, cannot overcome the sense or sound discords which certain words contain in themselves. Also, connotations are inescapable, and in the case of political words these are often unmanageably large and vague. Sagittarius in the *New Statesman and Nation* writes plenty of this kind of verse. In so far as he can be said to have thought out his intentions at all he is moving in the direction of satire, almost of satire in the Roman sense ; a conception implemented by his freer use of other metres beside the heroic couplet, which enable him to produce occasionally what can only be called an uneasy parody of serious patriotic verse. The best of Sagittarius comes out in such lines as :

> Democracy need not despond
> While Britain's word is still as good
> As Hitler's bond.

This spirit of parody was part of the stock in trade of Juvenal.

The satiric method was in any case too leisurely for Messrs. Auden and Spender and their school. Accordingly they took the violent step of a complete break with tradition, and they did it with a curiously fierce joy. It cannot

be too strongly emphasized that their action was deliberate, conscious and artificial. They disregarded the wise warning of Mr. T. S. Eliot,[9] and made in the twinkling of an eye a voluntary sacrifice of all human experience, denying themselves the numerous advantages of an audience prepared in a certain tradition by the literature of the past, and preferring to begin again from the very beginning. I do not mean that they are without influences : on the contrary, the borrowing is often crude, even in the Latin sense of undigested. But they desire to do what has never been done before. They use the word Revolution, with ecstasy, about their own trade, and seem totally unaware of the grim and barbarous connotations of the metaphor. If it were possible it would clearly be valuable to make such a statement of their position as would turn back into the main stream of poetic tradition these who have robbed, as well as burst, its banks. It should be possible, for they are already beginning to come back of their own accord, and we, who have no vomit to return to, may carry the process further. But what are we to think of the fact that they did not turn to Russia until the European slump ; or of their subsequent disposition, since the revival (through no fault of theirs) of comparatively comfortable economic conditions, to acquiesce in the very system they before desired so violently to change ; returning like Alpheus, as soon as the dread voice was past ? Equally, what are we to think of their noisy criticisms of the present order, which still sound in our ears ? Have they not degraded poetry in a way that makes the degradation of it laid at the door of Euripides seem positively ennobling ; inasmuch as they gladly labelled themselves writers of propaganda, branded themselves voluntarily with the stigma of escapism, which is indelible ? Yet their single error was the common one of poets, that they jumped to conclusions.

If we ask, whether post-war conditions, which are claimed to have invalidated the neutral poets, are really so specially urgent, most people's answer would be either a categorical Yes or a categorical No. There are but two alternative cure-all theories on the subject, and both deny the possibility

of a third existing. It must be difficult to decide between two such intransigeant beliefs as hold the field, beliefs which earn the name not so much because they have faith in the past as because they blindly trust the future (credulous beliefs, to be sure!); and, in the case of that one which answers Yes to our question, an analogous easier examination is provided by the formal aspects of its poetry. There was some excuse for the ridiculous caperings of those Georgian poets who abolished form altogether and wrote in *vers libre*. They were at least consistent. But the socialists do not disapprove of formalism, so long apparently as it is not too formal. They will rhyme "heart" and "coat," but not "heart" and "art": one may be forgiven for asking which in fact rhyme: they are quite content to retain five stresses in a line, provided the unstressed syllables number more than five. All this is, or should be, to make them more intelligible to the masses, because the classical syllabically quantitive verse has become divorced from the common rhythm of speech. It certainly has not had that effect of increasing intelligibility. This is not of course to doubt the value of this kind of socialist poetry: it is indeed a sort of poetry which gives the well educated man a new respect for his education, without which he could never have traced the connection of it as far as he does. But it certainly does not cause him to lose confidence in himself, as it theoretically should. It is certainly not a poetry which is sung upon the housetops by the hungry proletariat. It is not the poetry of the Internationale. On the contrary, when it is understood, its effect is to provide a sufficient outlet for discontent in itself:

> And enterprises of great pitch and moment
> By this regard their currents turn awry
> And lose the name of action.

Once more, *La Révolution est fichue*. This could not happen if the real culture of England were not still that of its most cultivated age, the Victorian age, if Auden and not Tennyson were its spiritual dictator. It is true that the Victorian age did not feel certain social problems as acutely as we do, but this is not to say they are unprecedented. The age of

Shelley knew them: yet Shelley did not find conventional metre unsuited to his romantic and revolutionary verse. I mention this to refute the notion that to be romantic and revolutionary it is necessary to be incomprehensible; which might seem to some people an argument against revolution and romance.

As with form, so with content. The socialist poets are very ready to speak to the programme of Marxian orthodoxy, claiming they need no longer feel a situation in all its details before composing it, or produce something which will be valuable when the ephemeral struggle is over. What right have they to feel exempted from the general laws of poetry? Was there no oppression before 1918 (or to be more precise 1931, when they decided to recognize it)? No economic disorder, Zeitgeist, discontent? On the contrary, they may if they wish call to their defence all the authority of the name of Wordsworth, the weighty authority of such lines as "Clarkson! it was an obstinate hill to climb" (the hill was the traffic in slaves), or "Call not the royal Swede unfortunate" (the royal Swede is King Gustave of Sweden), or again "Ah! where is Palafox?" (where indeed?), or lastly, to take a more significant example still:

> Here pause: the poet claims at least this praise
> That virtuous liberty hath been the scope
> Of his pure song.

This shows Wordsworth already on the defensive, assailed by Doubts as to the Value of his Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty, and making the excuse that his standpoint is outside and above all party feeling. It also shows in what direction the socialist poets are leading us—to "pure song" of which "virtuous liberty" is to be the scope.

If then there is no novelty in oppression (though of course the proletarian poet puts Wordsworth, after Woolworth, on his roll of Enemies of the Revolution) is it perhaps nevertheless more comforting to the sad communist to have his sorrows treated as merely part of the general *Weltschmerz*, and not even be paid the compliment of

personal consideration? That is one of the many alternative theories that have sprung up to explain the unnecessary phenomenon: there are others, as varied and as disingenuous as the official justifications for the rape of Czechoslovakia: as for instance, that the muddle is only temporary, and business will soon be as usual (then why ever shut up shop?); or that in a socialist poet the man is responsible for the political preaching, the poet for the poetry (in which case it seems unfortunate the poet and the man are on speaking terms); or even that any poet would be well advised to dress up his poems in such a way that they may appeal to the politically-conscious (the exact opposite of the classical method, taking public symbols for the personal instead of personal for the public), because the politically-conscious are the only confessedly intellectual class in existence to-day: surely this last is plain prostitution. Besides, politics does not bulk so large in anybody's thoughts as is thus made out. Interest in it has certainly grown, but most intelligent poets will continue to save their intelligence for a better purpose than trying to give rhythmical expression to things which are not in themselves rhythmical; or, if they are, it is with the rhythm of the dynamo, not with that of returning seasons and the rotation of crops. The liberation from tyranny of a million nameless serfs is less to us than the judicial acquittal of one friend. The fine ideas of Socialism are the common stuff of patriotism and life in general, and were before Marx was born. What is new is all details; and could anything be more wrong-headed and insincere than to choose to be concerned with formal justice, rather than with the actual justice to which it is a prosaic approximation; or to call a slag-heap our Parnassus, our Pierian stream the sweat which drips from the forehead of the unsuccessful Bolshevik artisan? It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the poets who skip with such alacrity to fresh woods and pastures new have broken with the past simply in order to avoid unequal comparison with the past. In any case they would not have earned the approval of the divine Lenin himself; who, so far from despising *bourgeois* art testified repeatedly to the emotion

aroused in him by the music of Beethoven and the acting of Sarah Bernhardt.

This worship of things Russian, the *Drang nach Osten* of poetry, is as curious a phenomenon as the poetry it produces. Art is surely the weak point of socialism, as it certainly is of most socialists. They leave it outside their comfortable cosmology, as something merely embarrassing. They give artists the status of artisans, and this is supposed to solve the great question of their isolation in *bourgeois* communities. But the articles they produce cannot be brought down to the same status. Every garment woven on the same factory-loom is identical in all respects, but the august creations of the human mind cannot be mass-made. It is not sufficient in Russian for all poems to be as like as two peas, for every pea is unique : they must be as like as two pins. Yet, supposing the discipline of communism were benevolent, even with the orthodox the value of the individual decision to accept it and unite voluntarily with the will of the majority is lost if the individual is aware that his work will not be published unless it exhibits this unity of will. Christ, it will be remembered, did not make the mistake of converting by miracles. The heretics (that is, all bad socialists, and all good socialists who are also good poets but not good socialist poets) are of course in worse case. After all, it is the least objectionable feature of totalitarian states that they suppress complete liberty, which is licence ; or even that they suppress intellectual liberty—indeed the antithesis is unreal. Each recognition of joy and sorrow supplies an inner compulsion. We may even admit that an inspiring idea has been put before us by those states. What is objectionable, especially to the heretic, is that the idea has become an ideal, and is thus on its own level both too narrow for and inappropriate to anything so real (in jargon, so realist) as poetry. Yessenin wrote

> I accept all—just as it is I take it,
> I am ready to travel the newly broken road.
> I give my whole soul to October and May.
> Only my loved lyre will I not give.[10]

which to the ordinary Marxist must be simply incomprehensible, for dialectic materialism allows nothing to be more real than a *risorgimento*. The dilemma of Yessenin arises most acutely in poetry which unlike music and painting must always be in a certain degree explicit. Even in music and painting it is felt. True, Richard Strauss continues popular in Germany although the lesson of his music, properly understood, would be ceaselessly undermining the foundations of the Third Reich. But Shostakovitch was disgraced in Russia for writing *bourgeois* music. But in poetry the difficulty of holding the balance between the state and the individual has far more serious consequences. Yessenin hanged himself, with boxcord, and Kutznetzov died by his own hand in the midst of joyfully celebrating his country's factories. Even Maiakovsky committed suicide, though his final theory of poetry was as Marxist as it was unsound, if we may believe the following passage :

> The poet is not he who goes around like a curly lamb and bleats on lyric love themes, but the poet is he who in our ruthless class struggle turns over his pen into the arsenal of weapons of the proletariat, who is not afraid of any dirty work, any theme about revolution, about the building of a people's industry, and will write agitation pieces on any economic question.

Maiakovsky, Kutznetzov, Yessenin : these three at least cannot be accused of indifference to the revolution. But indeed we are none of us indifferent, and the communist has no right to call us so because we do not choose to play his game. We have all grown up in the same atmosphere of tension, with wars and the rumours of war moving nearer like Tarquin in the dark. What wonder if we feel a greater attraction than ever to the " lyric love themes " which also with less cause pleased our serener ancestors ?

Maiakovsky's death is especially interesting. He had not always been an orthodox communist, but tried at first to follow his own brand of communism, with his poetry as his election agent. He thus committed the great sin of letting his personality interfere with his poetry, and in revenge the poet interfered with the man ; for had he not been a poet, he would not have felt it impossible to go on living. He does not deserve the extravagant sympathy

which has been heaped upon him. Yet in a sense the man always must interfere with the poet, for the poet transmits what the man receives. But the very effect of this process depends on the extent to which the two are dissociated. Paradoxically, Maiakovsky erred in the same sort of way as the Auden-Spender school: he misunderstood the meaning of the theory that "the artist's whole personality must co-operate," which really demands the acceptance of discipline and a quality almost as ascetism. He never accepted this discipline, the discipline of fidelity which it is necessary to accept, and his acceptance, finally, of the discipline of Marxism, to which the same awful authority does not attach, was what killed him. There are, I suppose, three component forces in the poet: human, personal, and poetic. It is the human force which is influenced by the "maelstrom of the modern panorama," the "current of contemporary consciousness" or what you will. It is the personal force which is bound up with the poetic, not disastrously as in the vanity of Maiakovsky but by a quite humble use of its own uniqueness, to which the poetic force supplies a counterpoint, or rather descant, of conformity.

The socialist experiment is one of many since Aristophanes to make the poet a good citizen: they have all failed. When Aristophanes spoke with approval of the idea that children should be instructed by poets, he chose poets because they of all classes of men would, he knew, be able to see furthest beyond the narrow ideal of citizenship, not because they would best be able to interpret it. Just for this reason Plato would lead all poets outside his ideal city and leave them to live at its gates. It is not easy to envisage a closer relationship than this Platonic one: one cannot worship what the world generally neglects without a little neglecting what the world worships. This is not to advocate a new kind of civil justice for artists, a sort of absolution from the normal law by which one has only to have had a picture hung in the Royal Academy to claim exemption from income-tax; or as though it were to be permissible to cut the throat of one's mistress so soon as one had written an ode to her eyebrows. Artists frequently do

demand a similar exemption in case of bigamy, neglect of children or breach of contract; and the common opinion allows the "artistic temperament" excesses in less irrevocable misdemeanours, such as drinking and smoking, which it would not grant to the "respectable" man. But the more excellent artist does not make these demands.

If, however, we were to consider his feelings, would not the condition of society called an educated plutocracy (which is more or less what we live in) suit him as well as any, providing him at least with the necessary peace of mind, a measure of appreciation, and even bread? Those who object to the system of patronage because it "clips the wings of buoyant Pegasus" forget that this also occurs (and they probably glory in it) under other forms of government. If patron there must be, it is probably better to serve a personal patron, who has some intention of remembering the *sportula* of his client. Or if the contrary imputation be made, that an educated plutocracy takes too little account of its artists, it is difficult to see how official recognition can be more than farce. The poet's relation to the state may be very negative; but his feeling for his patron need not be insincere. It was, when Chaucer dedicated a poem to Richard II; and Wordsworth's dedication to George IV was in the circumstances still more absurd. But Tennyson at least did genuinely believe in a great deal that Queen Victoria believed in. In *Timon of Athens* a philosopher taxes a poet with deceit in his professions of admiration for his patron: the reply is in effect, that there is no deceit, the poet really does admire his patron. Even with the state the poet can have other relations than that of communism. In the past, even in England, especially in the eighteenth century, there was a very definite co-operation between art and government. It really did seem to be relevant when Canning rose in the House of Commons and belittled Napoleon's proverbial good fortune with the words

> . . . nos te
> nos facimus, Fortuna, deam, caeloque locamus.

If only this condition of society had not been destroyed!

The communist argument is certainly not answered by saying that art grows greater in a position of servitude, and will usually flourish under bad government. It grows greater only by struggling against the servitude; and to make this defence of the *status quo* is like throwing a cat into the water in order to discover whether it has enough power and skill to swim to the bank. We may grant further, without giving in to Marxist aesthetics, that in a perfect state of society there would be no place for art, and perhaps that we spend on the perfection of art the energy we might spend on the perfection of life itself. But this is no solution of what to do with art, for it only maligns art. It also takes far too charitable a view of life. To answer that there is and can be no perfect earthly state, that entire liberty is unattainable outside the divine polity which supervenes on and sanctions human institutions, sounds like, but is far more than, a mere paradox of the popular preacher. We should strive towards a natural essential conformity with the divine where the laws of divine and human justice seem no longer restricting in their effect but rather amplifying. Meanwhile the spirit of the struggle has found and will continue to find propagation in the voice of the poets. Thus there need be no revolution.

CHARLES HENRY SALTER.

NOTES

[1] This and the following example are taken from an article in the *London Mercury* for June 1938.
[2] From the *National-Zeitung*, February 11th-12th, 1939. By J. M. v. Koenneritz.
[3] From *A New Hope for Poetry*, by Mr. Day-Lewis.
[4] Sophocles, *Antigone*, ll. 666–7.
[5] Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, l. 1301.
[6] From an article on Poetry and Religion in the *Criterion* for January and May 1927, by M. Jacques Maritain, translated by Mr. F. S. Flint.
[7] Mr. Hone, in the *London Mercury* for February 1939.
[8] Quoted in *Have you anything to Declare* by Mr. Maurice Baring.
[9] I refer to the well-known essay on *Tradition and the Individual Talent*.
[10] This and the next quotation are from *Artists in Uniform*, by Max Eastman, and translated by him from the Russian.

I have been much impressed by some of the verse in THE POETRY REVIEW—particularly "Finis" by Winifred Coleridge. My mood was receptive I suppose, "How sad, but how brave," I thought.—JESSICA G. MONEY, Winnipeg.

PETER THEN QUESTIONED ME

PETER then questioned me. I said :
" The Judas-world still holds the bag ;
Expediency betrays her Lord."

" Keeper of records, I," he said,
" None else need turn the page
Where a fellow saint indeed sinned so ;
But he, repentant, long ago
Served well his new-found Lord."

" Christmas alone is loved on earth."
He said : " We taught no birth."

" My life. . . . I had my Calvary,
I knew Gethsemane. . . ."

" These are but names to me," he said,
And shook his peasant head.

" By these dark ways you once were led,
Here faith, sense blinded, inly bled—"
" The past is an empty tomb," he said.

" Yet the cross shadowed all the earth."
" There was no cross to me ; instead
Eternity came near to me,
And Love, that memorable sea."

" It has patterned all our lives," I said,
" Runs still the purple, poignant thread
Throughout the verbal tapestry
You wove while it was red."

" Warp for a living woof ; but remove
The shuttle and the spirit prove.
Each star now owns a testament
Woven from native thread.
The old looms are forgotten ;
But Christ survives the dead."

BRENDA F. SKENE.

TRAGEDY AND THE INFINITE: II

If we pass from *Hamlet* to consider certain other of Shakespeare's tragedies, we shall find that the primary matter is still the one central tragic impression. Take *Romeo and Juliet*. Here, again, we do not err when we focus our attention on the name-characters. Shakespeare has, indeed, created a world in which to set them—Mercutio, the nurse, the musician in the house of mourning. It is a world remarkable for its richness of detail, especially at so early a date in the dramatist's development. As Professor Raleigh says: "Unity, severity of structure, the beauty of simplicity and order—these may be learned from the Greeks. But where can this amazing secret of life be learned? It is the miracle of Nature." In this wide and multiplex creation of a world in which to set his principal characters, Shakespeare differs from Marlowe. But he is at one with Marlowe in making his main impression depend on the insistence of the Infinite, though usually, after his period of apprenticeship, his conception of the Infinite differs from that of his early master. And hence in *Romeo and Juliet*, the popular conception scarcely errs when it fixes attention on the balcony scene. For there are again two vital points in the tragedy—the infinite, here figured as infinite love,

> "My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
> My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
> The more I have; for both are infinite";

and, secondly, death, the portal through which we see the lovers pass, to make trial of their Infinite,

> "And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
> From this world-wearied flesh."

In the scene by the tomb, Romeo utters those words which are the *motif* of the tragedy, the light in which all that has gone before is clarified, the beacon cast out into the succeeding darkness, seeking to fathom with its ray of beauty and passion the unknown:

> "O my love! my wife!
> Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath
> Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:

Thou art not conquer'd ; beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advancèd there."

And again,

" Eyes, look your last !
Arms, take your last embrace ! and, lips, O you,
The doors of death, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death ! "

Poetry such as that falls as the fire, and, destroying the sacrifices of the immaterial, leaves only the altar of the finer spirit.

Or again, *Othello*. *Othello* is the tragedy of a heroic figure, an exalted idealist, whose love to him was the symbol and realization of perfect life—

" Had she been true,
If Heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I'd not have sold her for it."

And this glorious being is caught in the toils of one of those snakes, those flesh-consuming weeds that wanton in the fetid morasses of envy and obscenity, and drawn within the quicksands of that slime.

" O, insupportable ! O heavy hour !
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon, and that the affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration."

And once again, in the very frenzy of tormented imagination :

" Blow me about in winds ! roast me in sulphur !
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire ! "

And finally comes the reconciliation, as in *Romeo and Juliet*, of love that dares the unknown :

" I kiss'd thee, ere I kill'd thee :—no way but this,
Killing myself to die upon a kiss."

But note above all, for our particular purpose, the preceding speech. Othello is not dominated by intellect, as Hamlet, but by passion. In approaching the unknown, his attitude is not that of tortured speculation, but of dulled and bewildered feeling :

> " Speak of me as I am ; nothing extenuate,
> Nor aught set down in malice : then must you speak
> Of one that loved not wisely but too well ;
> Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
> Perplex'd in the extreme ; of one whose hand,
> Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
> Richer than all his tribe."

And then consider the superb and moving figure in which this passionate mind scales, Titan-like, the barriers of opposing heaven :

> " Set you down this ;
> And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
> Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
> Beat a Venetian and traduc'd the state,
> I took by the throat the circumcisèd dog
> And smote him—thus. [*Stabs himself.*]

It is hard to refrain from saying that that is the supreme of Shakespeare's imaginative treatment of the unknown.

For the man who hears the tragedies of Shakespeare is like a man who walks a ship, and sees between the starting planks the great sea heaving. Or again, it is as though the coverings of the universe crack, and through the fissure strikes in the Inapparent. It is idle to say that this is drama merely human. There are critics who contend that Prometheus is a demi-god, but Lear a type of madness or the diseased brain. Lear is humanity. When the storm breaks upon the heath, and Lear cries,

> " I tax you not, you elements, with unkindness ;
> I never gave you kingdoms, call'd you children,
> You owe me no subscription ; then, let fall
> Your horrible pleasure "—

then man aligns himself with the impersonal manifestations of Nature. Society, to its very foundations, is cleft in the midst. The bond of family kindness has been torn from it, and, falling upon it, ground it to nothingness. And Lear, from some impersonal power beyond the human, demands a new sympathy, a new Nature, other functioning. So, again, it is idle to pretend that the supernatural agencies in Shakespeare have the force only of hallucinations. That is to ignore the conditions of dramatic representation.

These spectres are seen and walk upon the stage: they are dramatic characters, in kind, if not in degree, just as are the living men. And note how Shakespeare avails himself of every chance of speaking of the strange, the unbalanced and the portentous.

> " It is the very error of the moon:
> She comes more nearer earth than she was wont,
> And makes men mad,"

in *Othello*.

> " Since I was born,
> Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
> Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
> Remember,"

in *Lear*.

> " Threescore and ten I can remember well;
> Within the volume of which time I have seen
> Hours dreadful and things strange, but this sore sight
> Hath trifled former knowings,"

in *Macbeth;* and there Ross continues,

> " Ah! good father,
> Thou see'st the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
> Threaten his bloody stage: by the clock 'tis day,
> And yet dark night strangles the travelling limp."

Shakespeare, like Milton, passing the " flaming bounds of space and time," has, in his own manner, hardly less than the Greek dramatists, lifted the stature and habitation of his tragic creatures to the Titanic and the demiourgic.

For it must be remembered what was the character of Shakespeare's master in tragedy. Of all the English dramatists, the one who has most deliberately, repeatedly and explicitly stated that human aspiration is towards the divine and tragedy is the failure to attain the Infinite, is the dramatist to whom Shakespeare served his apprenticeship, Marlowe. It is the reiterated note of *Tamburlaine*. The ambition of the Scythian shepherd is expressed in terms of emulation of the immortals:

> " Jove sometimes maskèd in a shepherd's weed;
> And by those steps that he hath scal'd the heavens
> May we become immortal like the gods."

And, in one of the great passages of the play, such aspiration towards the Infinite is affirmed not only of Tamburlaine but of human nature universally, wherein its physical structure tends to unceasing spiritual ascendency:

> "Nature, that fram'd us of four elements
> Warring within our breast for regiment,
> Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:
> Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
> The wondrous architecture of the world,
> And measure every wandering planet's course,
> Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
> And always moving as the restless spheres,
> Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest,
> Until we reach the ripest fruit of all."

It matters nothing to our purpose that the fruit to Tamburlaine is the conquest of the physical world. It matters nothing that Marlowe's infinite is materialistic. It is none the less an Infinite. Marlowe's gods may be the gods of Renaissance mythology—beings of glorified material sense, bathing in milk because it is more rich than water, and drinking—but what shall they drink when his common soldiers quaff:

> "Lachryma Christi and Calabrian wines,
> Ay, liquid gold, when we have conquer'd him,
> Mingled with coral and with orient pearl?"

The gods of Marlowe are none the less gods. It matters nothing that it is the physical world of Soria, Trebizon and Jubalter, "to Amazonia under Capricorn," that Tamburlaine would make his own. These are not towns and kingdoms: they are the ever-receding bounds of the visible earth to Renaissance search and discovery. They are the strange romantic landmarks on the pursuit of the unlimited. The philosophers have a distinction as to the nature of the Infinite which divides it into the true Infinite and the false: the false, as the unbounded, τὸ ἄπειρον of the Greeks, the horizon unceasingly stretched before our unceasingly advancing feet; and the true, as the eternally complete, figured among other figures, as the circle that returns upon itself; named, without figure, as the ideal, the perfect. This is the Infinite of the Mystic poet:

> " I saw Eternity the other night,
> Like a great ring of pure and endless light."

But the Infinite of Marlowe is the cruder, the more naïve and childish conception, if the philosophers must have it so. And, philosophers or none, it is certain that this conception of the Infinite was the one which Shakespeare took over from his master, and employed at any rate at the beginning of his work, if not later. *Richard III*, it is a commonplace of the school-books, is a Marlowesque creation; and we have already seen in *Romeo and Juliet* this unphilosophic theory of the Infinite. And, although the infinite that is the aspiration of *Othello* is not this, but ideal love, more fitly figured as a perfect chrysolite; and although the infinite of *Lear* is the perfect relationship of child and father; yet in *Antony and Cleopatra*, we have indubitably a return to the earlier conception:

> Cleo. If it be love indeed, tell me how much.
> Ant. There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.
> Cleo. I'll set a bourn how far to be beloved.
> Ant. Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth.

In *Macbeth* we appear to have the Infinite as the unbounded realm of evil, the ἄπειρον of blackness and hate encircling human life—" thick night," "the dunnest smoke of hell," " the blanket of the dark." In this Macbeth has " palled " himself, his

> " eternal jewel
> Given to the common enemy of men."

And *Hamlet* may afford a parallel to *Faustus*, as based on the speculative faculty. The key to *Hamlet*, I make bold to suggest, rushing in alas! where Swinburne feared to tread, —though others of whom I am unaware, may have trod the infatuate precipice before me—the key to the solution lies in this parallelism: *Hamlet* is Shakespeare's *Faustus*. In *Coriolanus*, again, we have an interesting combination and apparent shifting of the two points of view. The early Coriolanus carries the imaginative sympathy of his hearers with him—with, that is, his limitless pride and self-sufficiency. He is the incarnation of the Renaissance worship of power, however unmoral. That is Marlowesque. But

the later Coriolanus, from the time he bows his pride to the prayers of his mother and the claims of the state, has chosen the ideal of perfect civic life. And, dying, the only Rome that he can inhabit is the Rome of the spirit. That is the Infinite of completion, the true Infinite.

There is a further tragedy in English, so splendid in diction and rhythm as to compel our notice, however brief. I mean the *Atalanta in Calydon*. In that drama of noble blank verse and superb lyrics, the torch of Fate burns down at the will of Althaea, and with it fades the life of Meleager, her son:

> "And let me go; for the night gathers me,
> And in the night shall no man gather fruit."

But it is primarily the chorus that provides Swinburne with the medium for his questionings of fate and his thrinos upon life. For how else than bitter is the choric anger against Love? And what else than blasphemy is the choric hatred of the gods? But the negation of the gods was not the permanent tragic mood of Swinburne. The dramatic action of the *Erechtheus* is the realization of the highest good —of the true Infinite—through obedience to the law of sacrifice. Essentially, it is an *Antigone* in English.

And with the tragedies of Swinburne, we may pass, by an easy transition, to a last consideration. It may be said that the foregoing suggestions are a conceivable hypothesis for the Shakespearean or Romantic tragedy; but that they cannot hold for the Greek. The Greek, it may be said, and notably the Aeschylean ideal, is the limited, the ideal of submission. And various passages may be quoted in support of this objection. The Orestean trilogy appears to be full of them.

The subject is too wide for more than a suggestion. But perhaps the solution is somewhat as follows. The gods of the Greek dramatists are not gods at all. They are men—greater indeed than the heroes, but the sires of the heroes, the lovers of Io and mortal women, the champions of mortal men in battle, and, perhaps more notably, the pleaders for mortal men in the law-court of the Areopagus. Their kinship and conversation raises men to the sphere of

the ideal and the superhuman. But the gods themselves are finite. Their successive dynasties are swept away. Their rule perishes. And, what is more, they are the creation of the poet. They are dramatic characters, and take their part in dramatic action. The poet puts words into their mouth. The gods are only men raised to an ideal stature. Behind and above the gods, as behind and above men, is the Unknown, the true Infinite. It is to this that men must submit, not to the gods. It is to this that the gods themselves submit. It is said that the Greek genius is finite and limited. (Cf. Coleridge, *Lectures on Shakespeare*.) But the Unknown of the dramatists is not figured in the persons of gods of limited faculty. It is figured impersonally. It is figured by Aeschylus as Justice, whose altar men must revere; as Fate, to which Zeus submits. And by Sophocles the Infinite is figured as Law, the child of God:

> "laws that in the highest empyrean had their birth, of which Heaven is the father alone, neither did the race of mortal men beget them, nor shall oblivion ever put them to sleep." (*Oed. Tyr.* 865–870.)

That is not the limited hest of a capricious demi-god. No doubt, when the Infinite is defined as law, and justice and righteousness, it is not the Unknown of the darkness that surrounds Macbeth. But there is no man who would dare to say that it is the known and the comprehended. There is no dramatist who would dare to impersonate that law upon his stage, and put words within its mouth. It is the true infinite, perfect and complete indeed; but the arc of that circle is not rounded within the compass of the earth. It is the "Stern Daughter of the Voice of God," to whom the invocation was offered:

> "Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,
> And the most ancient heavens, through thee, are fresh and strong."

T. E. CASSON.

In the Literary Competitions organized by the "British Annual of Literature," the medals offered for a short poem and a volume of verse have both been won by Mrs. Ierne Ormsby, of Sheffield, an esteemed POETRY REVIEWER. The adjudicators speak very highly of Mrs. Ormsby's volume, *The Lonely Star*.

WHY COLERIDGE NEVER FINISHED "CHRISTABEL"

THERE were two main reasons why the haunting, magical fragment of *Christabel* was never finished. The defects of Coleridge's own character, and the nature of the poem itself prevented the creation of the proposed last three cantos, rather than severe and harassing circumstances imposed from without.

Wordsworth has said " the child is father of the man." The boy Coleridge certainly foreshadowed the vices and virtues of the adult poet. From his own confession and from Lamb's recollections we find he took no pleasure in boyish sports, read incessantly, was extremely fond of acting, and often deeply immersed in wildly imaginative and ornate tales like *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*. He says of himself:

> " I was a dreamer, fretful and inordinately passionate. I had all the simplicity, all the docility of the little child, but none of the child's habits. I regulated all my creeds by my conceptions, not by my signs, even at that age."

Now such self criticism often shows rather a peculiar form of self-introspection. It is scarcely healthy for a child to be so averse from active physical exercise, to dream so much that his will power, his self discipline are gradually sapped. Coleridge was naturally endowed with a powerful and vivid imagination, which was allowed to run riot in his isolation and loneliness during many years of his childhood. He had been spoiled by his mother; he once ran away from just punishment at school and only studied diligently when wisely disciplined by his master, who recognized young Coleridge's ability. His childhood and youth were thus in strong contrast to those of Wordsworth, who in *The Prelude* tells us of his youthful revelling in outdoor sport and his gradual growth of wise self-discipline and a marked sense of duty. Wordsworth, too, is remarkable for his plain unvarnished statement of any case, while Coleridge is often given to hasty exaggerations.

At the time of writing *Christabel* Coleridge had already contracted the habit of taking opium to relieve his physical pain. Originally his will power, his self-control, his

resolution to suffer manfully were but feebly developed; his fantastic imagination had been cultivated to the crippling of other faculties; and the effect of opium may be imagined. His brilliant genius was shrouded in a kind of coma, an unhappy lethargy which prevented the finishing of much fine work begun in a glow of inspiration. He was himself at times deeply and remorsefully conscious of this, but at others he was content to drift aimlessly and make comforting excuses for himself, like the child who dodged punishment, and who exaggerated and romanced.

These are some of his actual comments on the finishing of *Christabel*:

"My poetic powers have been in a state of suspended animation. But as, in my first conception of the tale, I had the whole present to my mind, with the wholeness, no less than with the liveliness of a *vision*, I trust that I shall be able to embody in verse the three parts yet to come, in the course of the present year."

The word "vision" is significant. It is a dream's tendency to fade into mist, unless immediately translated into some other medium. The effect of opium (its first influence, that is, on the fertility of the imagination) is very transient, as is evident in the case of that marvellous unique fragment *Kubla Khan*. There is evidence, towards the end of Part II, of *Christabel* that the influence is waning. Then the remark "I trust" does not argue any inflexible resolution, but rather a half-resignation to failure, if that *should* be the ultimate outcome.

It has been suggested that Coleridge had not much opinion of the worth of *Christabel* and so never finished it. He did say "I would rather have written *Ruth* and *Nature's Lady* than a million such poems," and he was certainly in no haste to publish *Christabel* (written 1798–1800, published 1876).

But I am inclined to regard the first remark as an example of the exaggeration to which Coleridge was sometimes prone, and also as a way of expressing his enthusiastic admiration and friendship for Wordsworth; and the second utterance as a mixture of dilatoriness and vain hoping that *Christabel* might yet be finished. From other

remarks one is led to infer that *Christabel* was very dear to Coleridge, and that he deeply regretted the failure of his resolution or inspiration.

"If I should finish *Christabel* I shall certainly extend it and give it new characters and a greater number of incidents." (like Scott's romances). "The endeavour to finish *Christabel* has thrown my business terribly back, and now I am sweating for it."

There are two baffling features in the discussion of this problem. Coleridge declared that though *Christabel* was unfinished, he had written up to 1,400 lines, until it was rejected by Wordsworth as "too long, impressive and discordant in character" for his new volume. The fragment we know is about 667 lines, and yet no unprinted portion was found in Coleridge's papers. Secondly, the author often declared that "the whole plan entire from beginning to end was in my mind," but Wordsworth unhesitatingly stated that, though at the time he and Coleridge were on terms of most deep and unreserved friendship and were in the habit of constantly discussing their projects, he had no idea as to how *Christabel* was to have been finished. Wordsworth added that Coleridge was no doubt sincere but that he had many schemes which bore no fruit. Then Gillman, in his life of Coleridge, actually quotes the suggested scheme for finishing *Christabel*. I will not give it in detail here, but it certainly does show the development of practically all the strands of the plot in part II. Personally I think that Coleridge's brain was sufficiently fertile to plan out many schemes for a suitable conclusion, but that he lacked both the resolution and inspiration to shroud the bones with the "true wild weird spirit" of part I.

Coleridge attempted a most formidable task in *Christabel*. He originally wished to write a long and many-textured romance, and to maintain throughout witchery and poetic beauty. And it is the nature of a flame to glow, and leap, then flicker and die out. Coleridge wanted his flame of inspiration to burn without being fed by fresh fuel. He relied on the persistence of the *vision*. He could not "extend it and give it new characters and incidents," and at the same time achieve "the true wild weird spirit."

He wanted to " both eat his cake and have it," and to do in poetry, what he did when out walking, cross uncertainly from one side of the road to the other, unable to steer a straight undeviating course. And in art there must be selection, limitation and a fixed goal to be pursued with unremitting devotion. No wonder Coleridge said " The first canto is more perfect, has more of the true wild weird spirit than the last "—it is an almost impossible task to suggest —" witchery by daylight." " I fear I could not carry on with equal success the execution of the idea, an extremely subtle and difficult one."

In part II we see his difficulties multiplying ; strand after strand of an elaborate plot is woven, with a consequent loss of poetic effectiveness, word magic, and haunting eerie atmosphere. Perhaps it is as well the last three cantos were not written, at any rate, by a Coleridge, for a lovely fragment is more precious than a laboured whole.

Perhaps it is ungrateful to cavil at Coleridge's lack of resolution. It may have been the natural accompaniment to that macabre, unfettered imagination that gave us these three unforgettable poems of another world : *Kubla Khan*, *The Ancient Mariner*, and *Christabel*. D. R. W. CARR

LEAVE THE DREAMER ALONE

LEAVE the dreamer alone to his dreams ;
His way is not yours,
Piling billets of wood to the sky,
Counting them over and over,
Seeing rain only as what wets wood,
And sun as what makes it dry.
His way is not yours.
He sails a new course forever,
Over slow seas to the joining
Of earth and sky.
What he finds there is all that will help you
When the billets have gone
And nothing looks down but sky.

HARRIET PLIMPTON.

A SLEEPING-DRAUGHT

VANISH the candle: window, come,
Like the memory of a face returning,
A square of grey where a star may gleam,
A star or a liquid planet burning.

The candle has gone with its moving shine,
Rose upon wall and picture gone.
Only the niggling fume will twine
In a little private moonlight on.
Then close your eyes that were happy to look
At the illustrations of candlelight,
For someone has taken that picture-book
And turned to the last plain page of night.
Now on that virgin leaf you must
Depict for yourself the sweet and good,
Till page and pencilling hand are lost
And the pictures flow of their own accord.

Then think of a wood so deep and broad
A thousand years you might walk in it,
And a waterfall in the midst of the wood,
And over the waterfall hardly lit
By summer darkness, a picture of stars,
And in that wood no sound at all
But the pounding fist of that waterfall,
The silver hand that goes down and down,
The gentle lion in the dark that roars,
The bells in the tumultuous town,
The city shouting for the famous,
The kind, the lasting, the enormous. . . .

Dear face, the only ornament
In these bare, pastoral, crooked walls,
The pillow's humble cheek you print
Holds your mind's jewel-case and spills
Your visions in a milk of pearls,
A foam of snow, or gout by gout
Bleeds them in rubies down the floor;
While all around you, flowering out,
Such tapestries of dream unfold,

The candle's faded pictures are,
Beside them, childish and unskilled,
So marvellous the alteration
Worked on crooked walls and bare
Because your mind's a great magician
Wandering in a maze of hair.

But now your face is floating deep
Glazed in reverie profound
Beneath the glassy floor of sleep,
And you have crossed that borderland
Where the forgotten walls of home
Not merely change but disappear.
Deep in that crystal form of time
Floating towards dawn, you will not hear
An owl beyond the chimney moan
The sinking of a crooked moon—
O may sleep prove that waterfall
And through your drowned, rejoicing flesh
Pour in mute thunder, lightening all,
Drench you in tumbling starlight, gush
About your limbs continually
In benediction of cool foam;
Until between the curtains Dawn
With her grave, compassionate eye
Earnestly and lovingly
Looks upon your face alone.
So that when again you come
Into fortune, and behold
The slight match by the candle curled
And the sad wick bent and cold,
The people of a different world,
You may think another day
As hopeful and as beautiful
As fond, forgotten Yesterday,
Which, being long and gold and big
And full of deeds, at length diminished
To a spark upon a wick
And in a wisp of nothing vanished.

LAURENCE WHISTLER.

ASSURANCE

WHERE are blooms of cherry now,
Miracles of white and rose?
Vanished from the April bough
Swiftly as the melted snows;
All are fled that once were brave,
We are mortal and must have
Time as brief, as swift a close.

We shall lose the cloud of pain,
Earthly shadow, and shall part
From this fever's fiery bane
When for Paradise we start;
Grief will be a memory,
Truth and beauty will not die
With the dying of the heart.

Never will their sweetness cease;
With this breathing how could go
Laughter, music, evening peace,
All the loveliness we know,
How could fade the morning's gold
When the light of life is cold,
How could melt the blossoms' snow?

Lacking wonder of the Spring,
We could not to Heaven come,
Lacking books at evening,
Golden lands in which to roam,
We were not in Paradise.
In all loveliness there lies
Promise of a lasting home.

PAULINE HUTHWAITE.

IN THE BODLEIAN

HEAVY with golden dust
The sunlight falls
Through Time across these walls;
Young eager feet,
That wake the immaculate hours,
Stir thought to flowers. M. NEWTON.

FIREFLIES

MY thoughts are
fireflies
In the dark inward
vision.
They lead me
astray,
As winged creatures
flying
At tangents to
unseen
Destinies.

Sometimes but
seldom
One brings a
purer
Flame of lingering
presence,
Lighting the way to
union
With the soul.

FRANCES PAUL.

A ROUNDELAY

SPRING time for sowing
What summer will bless
For autumn's bestowing
In plenteousness.

A little enjoyment,
A measure of pain,
A span of employment,
Then idle again!

So trembles this bubble—
This mystical breath—
Half joy, and half trouble,
Half life, and half death.

ROBERTA SHUTTLEWORTH.

FRAGMENT

TREAD softly in the midst of pain,
NEW Age is seeking birth.
As brown earth trembles in its travail pangs,
Suffers alone, unheeded by the throngs of men
Then bursting forth with vivid life, reveals
Its new-born flowers, the Pussy willow leaves,
All gaiety of spring in artist colours,
So we are born again.

As then in woodlands lovers stroll,
In country lanes the stream of people pass
Called by the spring to wonder at its joy,
So we shall walk, triumphant at the last,
When we have faced the labour of our days,
Struggled with pain, murder, lust of blood, decay,
And cut through all the undergrowth to gain the light:
As snowdrops pierce the darkness of the ground
To shine in purity. So we shall live,
We who have fought and suffered, we who die
In hundreds daily, we who starve and find
No home, no country, nothing worth in life
Save that which we believe in. This we know,
It is our comfort, our eternal spring.

ENID W. MARK.

VALUES

A HOUSE, not large; some buttered bread;
Some trees and garden-ground;
Dawn-waking and a sunset-sleep;
And the sea-sound;

Discerning love, with whom a word
In silence can be said;
A flower to warm my heart;
And a book, read;—

If these be mine, I'll view the world—
Hallucination's heirs,
All unaware the true is mine,
The mirage, theirs.

IRENE H. MOODY.

POWER

WHEN man creates a lily or a rose,
Of dew and sunlight, scorning graft or seed,
And spins from moonbeams Dionysian weed,
Then, surely ichor in his being flows.

When nature, forced by science, must disclose
The way to satisfy each mortal need,
To build a perfect state man may proceed;
And kin to Lucifer, himself suppose.

When he can cleanse the human heart of pride,
Bid lust and anger answer to his will,
Creeds, laws, and precepts he may set aside,

And he above concepts of good or ill.
But, until then, the elements decide;
No God is he, who such as they can kill.

G. S. ODDY.

COMPENSATIONS

I AM content,
Though very old and bent.
No longer I shall walk,
But since I freely talk—
I am content.

From home I cannot go
To roam the roads once more;
And breathe the wine-like air.
Yet at the window there—
I am content.

For life I watch in flowers
So patient, not like ours;
And when I gaze at stars
Gone are my prison bars.
Then, when I see the storm
And I abed, so warm—
I am content.

C. MORTON.

A THEORY OF POETRY

Enunciated by M. EDGELOW, who is in her twenties and makes no claim to be a critic : she is merely setting out the views of one who is probably fairly representative of this generation and who, while certainly not calling herself a poet, has at least tried to write, verse—and can therefore appreciate some of the difficulties it presents.

PEOPLE get so worked up over the respective merits of the so-called " schools " of poetry that they do not always see that they are missing the wood for the trees—if I may be pardoned the use of such a chestnut. Poetry has no doctrines : it is merely an avenue of approach which, while imposing nothing, enables men to see the inner meaning of things—their hidden significance.

Surely one of the most persistent needs of any human being is to feel himself master of his own particular circumstances, and to escape from himself. He can do this by identifying himself with something else, becoming merged in it, and for the time being forgetting all else. If you read Shelley's poem *The Skylark*, you will understand what I mean. Shelley possessed, in its poetical significance, the bird which gave him his inspiration—and it passes into the possession of whoever may read the poem. The same thing applies to good drama also. You can read the emotions which sway the characters and thus possess them.

T. S. Eliot has summed it up in his essay on " Tradition and the Individual Talent," in which he says . . . " poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion ; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality." This is a rather subtle point—I hope I have made it clear.

People seem to think, in a vague and sentimental sort of way, that the first duty of a poet is to " look into his heart and write." They are quite wrong.

It is absurd to suppose that because an emotion is strongly felt, it must necessarily be conveyed strongly. In all probability there is quite as much emotion behind the wretched little jingle of some amateur as there is behind some really great creative work : the reason he cannot convey it is simply that he lacks the art to do so.

A great actor who sways a vast audience is not himself affected by what he is expressing : in fact, the extent to which he can move his audience depends on the extent to which he can remain unmoved and therefore free to concentrate on his technique—his technical means of communication, if you like. This may be a blow to those romantics who cling to the Pagliacci theory, but is it not far more logical ?

Every true poet must have a deep and creative imagination and considerable insight. If he has these essential qualities, then emotions which he has never experienced will serve his turn as well as those familiar to him—though probably he will have experienced most of them.

But how is this emotion to be expressed ? How is it that an artist has the power to create such feelings in another simply by the use of

words? Again it is difficult to do better than quote Eliot, who says: . . . "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked."

Most of Eliot's own work does accomplish just that. Has the aimlessness of the purely social life ever been more perfectly evoked than in the line "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons"?

No comment needed.

When Mrs. Paulin stated in a recent letter to THE POETRY REVIEW that poetry need not express the age in which it is created, she betrayed a poor understanding of her subject. The whole trend and development of any form of creative art must surely be profoundly influenced by the spirit of the times. (Unless by poetry the lady means sentimental prettinesses about nymphs and shepherds and lovesome gardens. —I am afraid I don't mean that when I use the word.)

That is surely the reason why this generation finds so much more stimulation in the work of the Georgians than in that of the Victorians. Personally—for what it is worth!—I consider Tennyson, Rosetti, etc., almost perfect in their own way; they have a perfection of style seldom possessed by contemporary writers, but they have only familiar things and familiar views to present. I almost said commonplace! They relied upon accepted points of view, and that is something a poet should never do—in a sense it is a betrayal. He must have an inborn sense of spiritual adventure and progress, spiritual striving: he must seek the heights eternally, even if he scarcely understands where they lie, even though he knows he will never reach them.

And how would Mrs. Paulin explain the so-called decadents? They were a product of their age just as the Victorians were. The term, I believe, really means "one who has fallen from the established school of poetry." (How I hate that word "school" but it seems inevitable!) They offered two new lines of poetic susceptibility, both of French inspiration.

The first was what has been called impressionism, and looked for beauty in things as they strike the eye, rather than as they really are.

The second was what is usually labelled symbolism, and closed its eyes to the visible outline, looking for that inner meaning of which the exterior is only the symbol. I suppose one would call Paul Verlaine the outstanding symbolist. He felt that when we look at familiar objects we see, not outlines and colours, but shades—nuances. He discovered a new way of looking at these same things and described them in a new way also. I will quote a short poem of his in which there is an underlying feeling of desperate melancholy suggested by the choice of words and the way in which they are employed. I should probably spoil it if I attempted to translate it, so I will give it as it is. It is called *Chanson d'automne*:

" Les sanglots longs
Des violons
De l'automne
Blessent mon cœur
D'une langeur
Monotone.

Tout suffocant
Et blême, quand
Sonne l'heure,
Je me souviens
Des jours anciens
Et je pleure.

Et je m'en vais
Au vent mauvais
Qui m'emporte
Deçà, delà,
Pareil a la
Feuille morte."

Verlaine has set out his theories in *L'Art Poetique*, from which I will give a quotation :

. . . . .

" C'est des beaux yeux derrière des violes,
C'est le grand jour tremblant de midi,
C'est par un ciel d'automne attiédi,
Le bleu fouillis des claires étoiles !

Car nous voulons la Nuance encore,
Pas la couleur, rien que la nuance !
Oh ! la nuance seule fiance
Le rêve au rêve et la flûte au cor !

Fuis du plus loin la Pointe assassine,
L'esprit cruel et la Rire impur,
Qui font pleurer les yeux de l'Azur,
Et tout cet ail de basse cuisine !

. . . . . :

De la musique encore et toujours !
Que ton vers soit la chose envolée,
Qu'on sent qui fuit d'une âme an ellée
Vers d'autres cieux à d'autres amours.

Que ton vers soit la bonne aventure
Eparse au vent crispé du matin
Qui va fleurant la menthe et le thym . . .
Et tout le reste est litterature."

(One must of course take the word literature in the last line in the " sens facheux " : Verlaine was protesting against the extravagances of Theodore de Banville and the poets known as les Parnassiens.)

The decadents were thought immoral because they wrote —often gems of poetry—on such themes as murder, prostitution, and insanity. But they do make one feel they lived for beauty in spite of that ; they

never sacrified their art, but they combined the poetic and the prosaic, which most poets keep severely apart—they even wrote of indigestion!

Of course, they went too far . . . but they were surely influenced by a feeling of reaction against the floweriness of their predecessors. Sorry, Mrs. Paulin, but there it is!

En passant, I think there was a good deal of the decadent in such writers as Matthew Arnold, especially in his earlier work. When you read "Isolation," or "The Forsaken Merman," you can't help realizing how he felt the ugliness, the sameness and superficiality of modern civilization, even as it was in his day; felt also the isolation and loneliness in which each soul really lives.

Such writers as Eliot provide what one might call illustration of change. In his youth he was a rebel, a breaker of tradition, but to this generation he is an established institution—even slightly out-moded!

The Victorians liked to have all their thinking done for them—we prefer to do our own. There, in a few words, you have the whole essential difference. When you read such work as "The Hollow Men," you have to think, unless you are simply going to admit you do not understand what the author means. I know—because that is just what happened to me when I first read Eliot! Listen:

"Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow
For Thine is the Kingdom

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the shadow
Life is very long."

Does that give you something to consider? "Between the idea And the reality. . . ." Because if it does not—God help you! Not pretty, of course, nor consoling—no dope there. We cannot offer thanks for what we know, because there is nothing that we do know. And life . . . is very long—Is that truer poetry than a hymn to a rose, or Victorian treacle—or is it not? It all depends upon what is meant by poetry. Flecker said—I think it was Flecker—". . . . it is not the Poet's business to save man's soul, but to make it worth saving."

I think so, too.

We deeply regret to record the death of the Rev. David Ross Fotheringham, the devoted secretary of the Byron Society, whose enthusiastic co-operation as a member of The Poetry Society we enjoyed in joint undertakings. Animated by an indomitable cheerful spirit, Mr. Fotheringham was truly the heart and soul of the movements he directed, and we will sadly miss the co-operation, encouragement and wise toleration of this considerate colleague.

Books reviewed or advertised in this issue may be seen in The Poetry Society's library, to the extended use of which attention is drawn.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXXX

THERE are riches on the editorial desk this morning,—a new group of Miss Millay's lyrical poems, and a new book from Paul Engle. The world knows well, happily, Miss Millay's brilliant gift and is learning jump by jump that Paul Engle is claiming a foremost place among American poets.

Huntsman, What Quarry? (New York, Harpers; London, Hamish Hamilton) is the fifteenth volume of poetry from Miss Millay. This, her first book of lyrics since *The Buck in the Snow*, brings her back to us with all her amazing distinction. The beauty of life is still singing in her veins and, though years are marking her progress, in these lyrics there is no sign of age. In this volume she displays as ever a spritely sense of humour, turning a bit caustic at times. Percy Hutchison, of the *New York Times*, calls the attention of his readers to a Chaucerian touch: "the very magic of those eternal lines that open 'Canterbury Tales!'" The pages bristle with invitations to enjoyment. Shall we read "Intention To Escape From Him"?

I think I will learn some beautiful language, useless for commercial Purposes, work hard at that.
I think I will learn the Latin name of every song-bird, not only in America but wherever they sing.
(Shun meditation, though; invite the controversial:
Is the world flat? Do bats eat cats?) By digging hard I might deflect that river, my mind, that uncontrollable thing,
Turgid and yellow, strong to overflow its banks in spring, carrying away bridges;
A bed of pebbles now, through which there trickles one clear narrow stream, following a course henceforth nefast—

Dig, dig; and if I come to ledges, blast.

We will want to read also Miss Millay's sonnet "Czecho-Slovakia":

If there were balm in Gilead, I would go
To Gilead for your wounds, unhappy land,
Gather you balsam there, and with this hand,
Made deft by pity, cleanse and bind and sew
And drench with healing, that your strength might grow,
(Though love be outlawed, kindness contraband)
And you, O proud and felled, again might stand;
But where to look for balm, I do not know.
The oils and herbs of mercy are so few;
Honour's for sale; allegiance has its price;
The barking of a fox has bought us all;
We save our skins a craven hour or two.—
While Peter warms him in the servants' hall
The thorns are platted and the cock crows twice.

We find in this volume Miss Millay's tribute to that other fine singer, who has passed beyond our hearing, Elinor Wylie. We quote from it:

For you there is no song . . .
Only the shaking
Of the voice that meant to sing; the sound of the strong
Voice breaking.

Strange in my hand appears
The pen, and yours broken.
There are ink and tears on the page; only the tears
Have spoken.

An estimate of the genius of Elinor Wylie we find in another poet's volume:

Her gleaming words in rare mosaics patterned
Remain immortal proof behind her, here,
That through all travailing she used as master
Art's shining spear.

Insurgent spirit, with the questioning eyes,
For your inquiring soul there is no pause,
To-night you have but passed in slumber, silver deep,
Through bounteous doors.

The last sonnet sequence in this volume is a notable contribution to poetry considering life and its few days, with the inevitable coming of so-called death. We give the seventh:

Thou famished grave, I will not fill thee yet,
Roar though thou dost, I am too happy here;
Gnaw thine own sides, fast on; I have no fear
Of thy dark project, but my heart is set
On living—I have heroes to beget
Before I die; I will not come anear
Thy dismal jaws for many a splendid year;
Till I be old, I aim not to be eat.

I cannot starve thee out: I am thy prey
And thou shalt have me; but I dare defend
That I can stave thee off; and I dare say,
What with the life I lead, the force I spend,
I'll be but bones and jewels on that day,
And leave thee hungry even in the end.

One is blest to be able to read, one is thrice blest to be able to read *Huntsman, What Quarry?* From the delights of Miss Millay's book we turn to this brilliant young American, of whom we are justly proud.

Corn (Doubleday) is Paul Engle's fourth book and is a challenge and

a promise,—a promise, of more to come, for Paul Engle has measured only twenty-nine years on his journey through life. Hailing from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, he gained the knowledge that Coe College, the University of Iowa, and Columbia, had at their command, we read: "with soda jerking, carrying newspapers, chauffeuring and tutoring. As a Rhodes Scholar at Merton College, Oxford, he studied the great legacy in literature of England, under the poet Edmund Blunden. He was an editor of *The New Oxford Outlook*, rowed for his college for three years, played in the water polo team that won the championship for the University of Oxford, and we are told, is the only American within memory to have played in the College Cricket Team." What is he doing now? He is lecturing on poetry at the University of Iowa.

When a Rhodes Scholar, travelling here and there, gropes his way back to his own country this is what he has to say:

Too many hours, from a vague valley
In middle England . . .
I watched earth crawl into its timid shadow
Where, above Oxford wall and high Welsh rock,
Hovered the westward driven hawk of day.

. . . In that calm air
The tense American nerve relaxed, I lived
With a grey quietness that let the mind
Grow inward like a root . . .

. . . Yet alone
In evening room thoughtful with pipe and beer,
I heard down the long valley of my bones
The cry of home run like a calling hound . . .
Belly and brain, I lived America.

With full-throated ease he sings his songs and we turn to "On A Too Clear Night"—

Sky is too close tonight,
Falling over the land,
Level with foot and head.
Look! I can touch its bright
Terror with one bare hand.
This is a thing to dread.

I do not want more stars
Coming into my sight.
There are enough men here
Plain in the daily light
Without strange men from Mars.
I have enough to fear
On this round, living stone.

Moon, do not come too near,
Leave earth and me alone.
* * *
Let the old order stay.
Let day grow dark. Let hurry
Give up to sleep and rest.
Sky, go back, retrace
Your planet-wandered way.
Earth is enough for worry.

Being young, of course Paul Engle is in love. He writes "For Mary":

Thinking of you is natural now as breathing,
You move with the wind's walking everywhere.
I fill my lungs with you and feel you wreathing
My face in that loved element the air:
Even as you its life is all in touch,
Handlike wanting but to be aware
Of all a woman or a wind can clutch.
I watch a blown leaf bend. I see you there.

My eyes hunger for their far taste of you.
I have not learned the patience of the year,
Waiting a season till the change is due.
I know the earth is warm where your foot stands,
I know that good is but to have you here
And all our human truth the touch of hands.

For how many days have the poets written to Mary? This reviewer, on Christmas Night in Shanghai, penned an unpublished poem which begins:

Oh, Mary, have more pity for the sufferers of earth
Who without choice or query receive the gift of birth,
Who carry uncomplaining a weight of sin and pain
Oh, Mary, on the broken send your merciful sweet rain—

No less a singer than Zo Elliott, writer of "The Long, Long Trail," when recently at the San Francisco Fair beheld one of the great interpretations of that Mary, penned a sonnet. I do not have it all but he said: "Lady, I met you long ago in Rome when but a boy."

Let us close this encomium with Engle's conclusion:

To be at home here by the cornfield's edge
Under the big light of American sky . . .
How can I know the world and my place there
Before I know myself? Too long I went
With a great urge and shouting into life.
Now I will let it, like a change of season,
Come to me here . . .

I hope that in some degree, Paul Engle emerges from these pages.

The Bird Below the Waves by Benjamin Francis Musser (Brother Francis, III, O.S.F.) (The Magnificat Press, Manchester, New Hampshire), a volume of some 750 pages, is the collected spiritual verse from a thirty years' pilgrimage, 1907–1937, inclusive, now gathered together as a votive offering to commemorate the anniversary of an April day in 1908. The book is foreworded interestingly by Katherine Bregy, President of the Catholic Poetry Society of America, and Father Francis X. Talbot, S.J. In this book are to be found moving poems, tinged with the happy knowledge the poet possesses. We quote from "Prelude":

> ..... We pace
> This prison whence, from ragged hours torn,
> Out of ourselves, in this most servile place,
> The song is born.
>
> Out of ourselves, yet not from us it sings;
> Not of our fashioning those wings,
> Not ours that streak of flame,
> That magic name;
> Not ours the bird that flashes through these bars
> To soar with choiring stars.
> Ours but the listening ear, and then
> The urge, the pain, the pen.
>
> Whose is the song?
> Hush! that you may not sing it wrong,
> And you will know before the night is long.

Very much I like "Ballad Of A New Villon":

> They are closing in, John Henry,
> The law-dogs loudly bay;
> Where will you hide your frightened heart
> To-night, where will you stay?
>
> The Church cries out, John Henry,
> Her curses on your head;
> Where will you find a blessed grave,
> Cross-marked, when you are dead?
>
> The hounds close in, the saints press out,
> And you are crushed between.
> What will you do, John Henry,
> With none to intervene?
>
> *The Church can tear my soul from me,*
> *The Law can wield its thong;*
> *But they shall know that, even so,*

I'll still retain my song.

When they have worked their mighty will,
With life choked by a string
I'll belly my way up hell's high hill,
And sing! and sing!

"Second Spring" is one of the many well-done sonnets in this volume:

Now has the sombre winter of long pain
Lifted at last; skies have put off their hood
Of grey unwrinkled heaviness; the wood
Is bending from her fetters that enchain
Leafage and flower, and a scented rain
Sings to the brook-bed and is understood;
The giant stirs, proclaiming it is good
To be alive: the world is spring again.

Now have rust shackles, doubt and dumb despair,
Fallen away, and through the melting snow
Of disillusion comes a lovely thing:
In shining raiment Faith is moving there.
First innocence is sweet; sweeter to know
The glorious haven of a second spring!

As the Poet Laureate of New Jersey, his influence reaches far. And, in response to my letter Mr. Musser has sent us a very penetrating consideration of the art and power of poetry:

I have written extensively on the purpose and place of poetry and upon various technical details; much of this writing will be found in my two prose-on-poetry volumes (*The Passion Called Poetry*, 1930 and *Queen of Arts*, 1937), moreover, have gathered brief and pithy sayings of creative writers in four or five brochures issued to friends on as many successive Christmases, so that there would seem to be little I might add at this time; but if you wish to quote me, and consider my view of any merit worth the quoting, the following will perhaps suffice:

George Gissing has urged us "to let every land have joy of its poets; for the poet is the land itself, all its greatness and its sweetness, all that incommunicable heritage for which men live and die." If the poet is the land itself, poetry, which is much more important than the poet, is that land's very life. For poetry *is* life. A poem is not a book, neatly bound and placed on a top shelf to gather dust, or to be taken down only as an escape from life; it is not a column in printer's art, to be looked at casually in its place between advertisements in a popular magazine; a poem is not a sentiment, not a cerebral exercise, not a

piece of vers de société, not a rhymed jingle. A poem is not a picture. A poem is a *voice*, a voice crying too often in the wilderness, and the voice is the voice of life. We speak of the poetry of life. Well, poetry *is* life, life articulate. Poetry is life lived to its fullest, emotionally and intellectually, and then transferred, still in white heat, to the accident of words. Note that I say the " accident " of words. Words are essential to convey the vision, to communicate the ecstasy, but they are only the outward sign of that ecstasy, that life which is poetry, only a bridge and a faulty one for the sharing and carrying across of the poet's life above life. What he has made, everything he is, everything he has, this most intense awareness of the most intense life, he shares. And if those to whom he communicates his vision are caught up in that ecstasy of the maker, then the voice has reached its goal and become poetry to those who hear and has not cried in the wilderness in vain.

The poet is under no obligation to share this voice, though charity would expect it, but he is under obligation to complete what I like to call his little conspiracy with Heaven, that is to say to write down in the symbols and accidents of language the poem as it grew in his heart and his mind and his soul. His is the high privilege of being peculiarly allied with the Poet of the Universe in a work of creation. It is for this reason that I hold the nowadays unpopular belief that the poet's work is a vocation and a solemn concordat with God, and, accordingly while the poet is not bound to restrict his work to themes spiritual he is bound by reason of that creative concordat not to use a divine gift for the purpose of damning the Divine, not to employ his heavenly talent to blaspheme against Heaven, not to use the voice given him for the good of souls in invectives against souls and for the glorification of materialism and filth. The queen of arts is neither a harlot nor a revolutionist, nor is her voice that of an opportunist or time-server. She is the life and the voice of one who by his gifts is solemnly allied with the Creator of all things and with the Divine *Logos* the Word, until in some measure at least the poem becomes a faint echo of that Divine voice and its creator the emissary of the Poet of the Universe.

There are times when a reviewer feels a little like the man at the circus who has an interesting performer and, cracking his whip, tells about it. Such a performer is Dr. Merrill Moore in the realm of poetry. At thirty-four, he has already written more sonnets (about 50,000 at the latest count) than any other man that ever lived. Does not that smack of the miracles of circus life ?

That Dr. Moore does not adhere to the orthodox form, you quickly forgive and forget in the interest of his stories, arresting lines, exact images, all the response of a very lively mind to the variegated experience of life in his new volume, *One Thousand Autobiographical Sonnets*, (Harcourt, Brace, N.Y.). It is said of Moore that he has fashioned a sonnet as distinctly American as Petrarch's was Italian. We will sample them.

We stop at a celebration of James Joyce :

He never was very strong ; he never was
Very stable ; he never did amount to much :
Yet in his time he built a bridge connecting two far
And opposing countries, and over that did such
A population mingle that new laws
Had to be made to stem them and to bar
Their inter-migration.
Speak of him softly now !
Yes, it is you are the feebler ones who keep
His memory which is stronger than your myth,
Who dream and keep in dreams his memory ;

He was older and stronger than your kith,
He was older and stronger than your kin,
Older and stronger than you have ever been,
Older and stronger than you are apt to be.

After all, what are words for ? To carry a thought. If the form must bend to the thought, so shall it be but the thought must not bend to the form, as we often see.

Which brings me to my next choice, since this writing considers the strength of words : " Poets Live Upon The Strength Of Words " :

Dragon gives to poets what a dragon
Has to give to anyone, and *flagon*
To a poet is more than a drink.

In what subtle fashion poets think ?
Who can tell will get a golden apple
Or an octopus of flesh to grapple
Mailed mermen armed with sharpened swords.

Poets are feeble men who have no strength,
Who know no craft but what they can usurp
From ancient signs, in spoken word or letter
Written or graved somewhere—with this and that excerpt
They make new small mosaics, but not better
Than the old though wide in width and long in length.

Did I say " the thought was the thing " ? Have I not been contradicted in Moore's poem ?

Men in Procession by Adele Kelley Thompson, (G. P. Putnam's Sons), a first book from a New Yorker-born, New York educated, a member of Junior League, Colony Club, etc., is interesting. Mr. Williams Rose Benet thinks so, and says : " In *Men In Procession* one becomes

acquainted with a genuinely lyrical spirit responding to many kinds of beauty in the world around her." And Dr. William Lyon Phelps praises this author, calling the poems "real poems and not merely verse." Dr. Phelps draws our attention to the fact that Mrs. Thompson resorts to no sensational methods in singing her song, and his last sentence is of worth to those of us who believe in the tried and proven: "She uses the regular metres of English poetry and uses them with distinction" and to Dr. Phelps this is proof she is a real poet.

"Sanctuary" opens this collection:

No little view hedged in by iron gate,
And ringed about with man-placed brick and stone,
Can ever tame my fretful wings that bait
Uncharted strata where the stars are sown
Thicker than dust on a deserted grate.

I shall find sanctuary where the wide
Horizon rests upon the patient hills,
No longer fearful lest my earthly tide
Recede too swift, before my heart fulfils
A pledge to beauty that has never died.

Traveller and poet, we like "Remembering":

A bit of me lies a-dreaming
In an old Italian town,
And a bit of me strides exulting
On a wind-swept English down!

And part of me rests in quiet
On a curved Hawaiian beach,
And part of me scales the Kiolen hills
With the stars just out of reach!

And some of me breathes again the dust
Of a scorched Nebraskan plain,
And some of me aches for the shadow-cool
Cathedral aisles of Spain!

Oh! the youth of me seeks the highway,
The beauty of God-made schemes,
While the heart of me asks but a shadowed room. . . .
A flick'ring fire . . . and dreams!

The reaction of youth to death is celebrated in "The Boon":

One boon I ask of life. That when my youth
Retreats before the grey onslaught of years,
And Death stands forth in all his naked truth
And bids me come, acknowledging my fears,

May life not sound too loud a trumpet call,
Nor blind my eyes with one more Circe smile
Lest I turn back . . . deny that ghostly pall . . .
And forfeit my rebellious soul a while.

We leave this talented young writer with the last words of her book: "Finis":

When I'm sated with getting and giving
Rejoice! chant no dirge for me,
Since I who am chained to the living
Know that the dead are free!

Bullinger Bound (Harper Bros., New York), a ninth book from Leonard Bacon, brings the reader interesting impressions of places and people and of the writer himself. No less a critic than George Jean Santayana has said of Bacon: "Satiric verse in the grand manner. Delightful." A sentence in the Foreword is a guide:

"With respect to the personalities described in part of the book, the author has endeavoured to deal with them in such a manner that he might, like a better poet before him, quote Shakespeare's disclaimer: 'Oldcastle died a martyr. And this is not the man'."

Let us read "Semi-Centennial":

The times are whiffling back and forth
And we change with them lief or loth.
Yet the wild geese are honking north
And the trilliums flare in the undergrowth.

And what the poets have said or sung
However mad is still half-true.
And though I grow old who once was young,
I stand by that as I used to do.

The beard's gone grey in the fiftieth year,
The muscle's flaccid that was so staunch.
If you consider, it would appear
There's a development of paunch.

Yet what is so good as my beech-wood,
The silver shaft, and the thin green leaf?
Her beauty that is not understood
Still cleanses mirth and cleanses grief

That come by changes. She can heal.
She quickens still with the same power
That blunts the spike of the solomon-seal
And sweetens the arbutus-flower.

Leonard Bacon's gift for portraiture flavoured with humour is not easy to match. You must really buy the book, if you ever do such a risky thing. On page 47 we meet " Weldon Kirk " :

I might as well admit I didn't like him,
A fact I thought important at the time.
He was pale, with too much body, too little strength,
And a sickly literary look. Grieved eyes
Seemed to crave sympathy that one withheld
With a deliberate instinctiveness.
And he wrote poetry. Twice I repulsed
Poor Weldon from the mystic gates desired
Of a Paradise called English 79.
But pertinacity beat me in the end,
And he attained to his felicity.
That class that year was full of actual talent,
A baker's dozen of golden lads and girls
That dazzle their instructor yet.

And so it goes for several pages. This is not just a book, it is an entertainment.

Into Space by Erica May Brooks, (House of Field Inc., New York),—a first book—is forwarded by Donald S. Rockwell, author, explorer, poet and editor of *Radio Personalities*. Quoting :

" Here are fragments which seem to have been shipped from the meteors of space and other oddments that one senses must have been quarry-deep in the travail of mother earth."

The phrase that is on everyone's lip at the moment is " the world of to-morrow," as exemplified by the some sixty nations taking part in the World's Fair, New York. The following poem also catches this trend of thought, " To-day's Garden " :

I will not seek
To peep,
Beyond
The garden
Of To-day.

I'll tend
My flowers,
Cherish
Their fragrance
Till the last
Sunray.

Knowing that
Thou wilt blow wide
The wicket,
Through which I shall
Pass,—
Into the new garden
Of Tomorrow.

With lines so short it is proverbial to the reviewer to suggest a comparison to the oriental. However, there is nothing oriental in the thought of these short lyrics.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S HEADQUARTERS AT THE WORLD'S FAIR.

The headquarters of The Poetry Society of Great Britain and THE POETRY REVIEW at the New York World's Fair are ideal in every way. Located in the Shakespeare House, in the Merrie England Village, on the beautiful Fountain Lake, the headquarters have many distinctions. The first is that since the New York World's Fair is a world institution, with fifty-eight countries represented, it is truly distinctive to be one of only half a dozen organizations in the World's Fair to have representative headquarters. A unique distinction is reflected by the remark of a columnist who, prior to the opening of the Shakespeare House, pointed out that there were no books in "the World of To-morrow" represented by the World's Fair. "Would the World of To-morrow be bookless?" he queried.

The Shakespeare House and the adjoining Sulgrave Manor and Dickens House have a wealth of rare works by the greatest names in literature. In the Shakespeare House, which is the headquarters of poetry and drama, are such rare works as early seventeenth-century editions of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Edmund Spencer, Christopher Marlowe, Sir Philip Sidney—and even so rare a work as Sir Thomas Wyatt's *Songes and Sonnettes*. The important editions of Shakespeare include the Washington family's set of Alexander Pope's Shakespeare. There are many folio size editions of classic works and first editions of such works as Thomas Gray's, Oliver Goldsmith's, etc. Pages from the original Caxton printing of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Gower's *Confession Amantis* and not less than a score of works published between the fifteenth and the sixteenth century are in large renaissance cabinets with numerous original parchment documents of different periods from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

The paintings include an ancient portrait of Shakespeare that belonged to the Washington family. Records discovered by Mr. Henry Woodhouse, the owner of the collection, disclose that the Washingtons were neighbours of Shakespeare and one of the Washingtons is buried near Shakespeare in the church in Stratford-on-Avon. There is also exhibited the long lost portrait of Mary Queen of Scots painted by Francesco Zuccaro in 1574–76, when that famous painter went to England and painted Queen Elizabeth and many of her courtiers, among them Sir Henry Lee, Queen Elizabeth's champion, whose portrait hangs in the adjoining Sulgrave Manor.

A six-foot painting of Parnassus, flanked by scenes from Shakespeare's plays and numerous letters, playbills and engravings of Shakespearean interest cover a wall of the Shakespeare House. Another wall is dedicated to Keats and Shelley and the contest for the best poem about Keats and Shelley for the $100.00 prizes offered by Mrs. Alice Hunt Bartlett, American Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW, which closed on August 4th. The exhibit includes a painting of the Piazza di Spagna in Rome where the Keats-Shelley home is located, and letters, first editions, rare engravings and other memorabilia.

The poems entered for the Keats-Shelley contest were read in the three auditoriums made available to The Poetry Society and THE POETRY REVIEW; the Shakespeare House, the Old Globe Theatre of Shakespeare fame, and the Village Green, where over 500 persons were assembled at different times of the day, affording an audience of from 3,000 to 6,000 daily.

The walls of the Shakespeare House are covered with rich green velvet with gold-embroidered valences and tapestry such as is shown in old engravings as having graced the places where Shakespeare and his contemporaries lived. The furniture is also contemporary, including chests as well as state chairs, and credenzas, sideboards and tables of Shakespeare's days. Everything in the Shakespeare House finds authority in a quotation from Shakespeare's writings. And Shakespeare himself finds authority in a proclamation issued by King James I on May 19th, 1603, advising the Sheriffs, Mayors, Constables and other dignitaries that he, King James, has licensed Lawrence Fletcher, *William Shakespeare*, Richard Burbidge, and others of his "servants" to travel through the kingdom to play comedies, tragedies, histories and other plays.

The Shakespeare House is the centre of poetic and dramatic activities. There is a continuous stream of visitors, which increases on Mondays, when are held the sessions of the Fourth Congress of American Poets, of which Mrs. Bartlett is the Chairman-General. On Mondays poetry rules from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Eminent poets from all countries and all parts of the United States discuss the fascinating aspects of the "Poetry of To-morrow" and read their poems over the microphone to the Village Green audiences.

The July 31st Session adjourned to the Village Green Terrace for a Poetry Luncheon in honour of Mrs. Bartlett, whose birthday falls on that day.

The courtesies of the exclusive Sulgrave Club (the membership is $100.00 for the season) are extended to the poets by the Earl of Gosford, president of the Club, and by Mr. J. T. Schless, the president of Merrie England. That courtesy makes it possible to hold meetings on rainy days in the huge Sulgrave Club Assembly Hall, which is 80 by 40 feet, richly furnished and decorated with Elizabethan and Jacobean furniture and tapestry and by a fine collection of paintings.

* * * * *

LORD RENNELL, feeling that members of The Poetry Society would be interested to know of a project for remedying an inexplicable omission, sends us the following note:

It will be a surprise to many who have not personally examined the memorials in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey to learn that, though more than a century has passed since his death, no tablet has been erected there to the memory of one of the best-beloved of English

poets, John Keats. In a letter to his brother George in America which refers to the bitter attacks in the *Quarterly* after the publication of *Endymion* he wrote undaunted, "I think I shall be among the English poets after my death." That end was not far off and ever since he has been so enshrined wherever the English language is spoken. Britain and America joined hands in making provision for the acquisition in permanence of Wentworth Place in Hampstead where the best years of his brief life were spent and of the house in the Spanish Place at Rome, where he died.

The British committee of the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association, at a recent meeting held in London, decided that the absence of a tablet commemorating John Keats in Poets' Corner should be remedied and that the Dean of Westminster should be approached to obtain his authorization, communicating the decision to the American Committee. The Dean has given the proposal a warm welcome and is ready to assign a vacant space where such a memorial tablet would be conspicuous. It is contemplated therefore to place there a marble plaque bearing a profile medallion portrait of the poet with the appropriate inscription. Two very suitable places for the tablet are available in Poets' Corner.

The sense of the Committee was in favour of endeavouring to raise the funds necessary for its execution by personally approaching lovers of Keats rather than by a public appeal, at any rate until it has been ascertained whether the estimated sum required of £350 can be so obtained. Contributions may be sent to Lord Rennell, 39 Bryanston Square, W.1.

GERARD HOPKINS AND MILTON

(*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW)

Sir,—No one would dispute it, that a poet is at his highest when his utterance is so his own that it recalls no predecessor; that the finest poetry of Keats, for instance, is not when he is writing with the verse of Milton or another present (in any sense of "present") to his conscious or subconscious mind. Further, no one would dispute it, that the most praiseworthy study of a poet is the search for, and the rendering oneself at home with, that utterance in any man's book which is most his very own. That is arduous: Hoc opus, hic labor est. What is not arduous; what, moreover (which is a great point), gives the critic most to speak about, to make his own display with, is the discovery of lines of this or that poet recalling some well-known stuff of Milton or another. Just so, it is easier by far to compose a poem, say in the same metre as Wordsworth's *Three years she grew in sun and shower*, and with a not dissimilar subject (I once did that myself, without at the time of composition being aware that I was merely "copying"), than to write a really original poem. As I have said, it is not arduous to trace Milton or Donne in the poetry of Father Hopkins; it is, human nature being of such frail clay, more fun; but surely one ought to be on one's guard against the facile belief that such

tracing is the highest one can reach in the matter of studying a poet's book? There are indications of the public's readiness to accept this, that when a critic has shown (rightly, or even wrongly?) to what other poet his man is to be "related!" he has shot his bolt as critic, and has reached the point in his study of his author beyond which no man can go. All a mistake, that, I believe myself.

After these preliminary remarks, meant lest any one should attach too much value to what follows (thinking that I attach as much, which I *do not*), let me add that it is difficult to know what ear, hearing

> . . . while there went
> Those years and years by of world without event
> That in Majorca Alfonso watched the door (No. 49),

could not be aware that Milton's mind might well have thrown up such a turn of thought, as he certainly wrote: They also serve who only stand and wait. To my mind, there is a similarity to Miltonic thought in (No. 45):

> I see
> The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
> As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse;

and for me it is not only because the word "scourge" occurs also in Milton's

> . . . when the scourge
> Inexorably, and the torturing hour
> Calls us to penance,—

it is not only because of that, that I cannot read Father Hopkins's lines without being reminded of Milton's. In both passages I hear the same high, despairing, unalterable sorrow and sadness; the expression of that degree of sadness which, because it cannot change or pass away or even sensibly diminish, is a thing the mind of man can establish itself in, as it cannot establish itself in any insecurely founded happiness; the kind that most earthly happiness is.

To pass now to some humdrum facts. There is no *Donne* in the *Golden Treasury*; for (was not this so?) the poem that Palgrave included as of his parenthood proved on better knowledge to be another man's. A contemporary of Palgrave's, if one twenty years younger, was Father Hopkins. If Donne had so little found his way into Palgrave's consciousness, it would be for the same reason (i.e., general ignorance), should Donne equally have failed to penetrate far, if that was the case, into the consciousness of Manley Hopkins. The negative evidence on this point is that in the 460 pages of his letters to Bridges and Dixon the name of Donne does not once occur; at least I cannot find it in the Index, neither do I remember a single statement regarding Donne, or any writing of his being used as an illustration. Now the name of Milton occurs again and again in those letters. In the Index there are over sixty references given; one of them is "ii. 13–17"; that is to say, the discussion of the matter that time—it is *Samson Agonistes*—extends to five pages of print. Many are the proofs

of Hopkins's great familiarity with the Milton texts. Thus, when Bridges, in a poem, had " unblamed " (not an out-of-the-way word by any means) at the end of a line in a poem that Hopkins was given to read and criticize, the past participle immediately recalled to him Milton's " May I express thee unblamed," the beginning of the third line of Book III of *Paradise Lost*. Better than that, better, I mean, as illustrating the point, is that Hopkins could write such a thing (it is to Bridges; vol. I, p. 66):

> No doubt my poetry errs on the side of oddness. I hope in time to have a more balanced and Miltonic style. But as air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern or what I am in the habit of calling " inscape " is what I above all aim at in poetry.

Has any one ever traced a connexion between that and the " poetics " of Donne and the Metaphysicals? I cannot hear any myself.

How much sense, even how much truth, may there be in the following " tirade "? It was spoken into my ear the other day by a student of our poetics, or a follower of their shifting sands, who will speak freely enough, but, I believe, never writes, much less to print:

> When the generally held poetics change from one generation to another so as if zenith and nadir had changed places, making who was, by *this* generation, a little-regarded writer, become for *this next* generation a revered and much-spoken-of poet—Donne's an instance; even the classical instance; for he was as nobody to Tennyson and Browning and their fellows, and is a skied creature to us—then, instead of a tool's having been put into the critics' hands, they are given a talisman. A talisman is a thing capable of working wonders. Now obviously, except for those very firmly planted on their critical feet, there is a danger in the possession of anything capable of working wonders; the danger, that is, of one's being so fascinated by the wonder-working in itself, that the talisman will be used for effects that it was not meant to work; actually does not work, but is only believed by the self-deceived to work. You know, Chapman, you'll find a critic dragging in Donne's name with nothing whatever of *apropos*-ness, and why? Because, after the neglect of generations, one of us " discovered " him; it was thrilling; the excitement of it all went to his head, and from his the excitement has passed into ours. The moment poetry becomes the subject of conversation or discourse, we think of Donne. We are as those who would say: " If you speak of poetry, speak of Donne! " as if we were drunk and happy people. It's imitativeness does it—imitativeness and the fascination of whatever has talismanic power. If I were you, my rule would be: " Wherever there is a mention of Donne in a critical essay—do this at least for twenty years—cut it out in the proofs."

One might do worse!

Yours, etc., J. A. CHAPMAN.

A NEW DANTE COMMENTARY

IT would be difficult to praise too highly the edition of Dante's *Divine Comedy* which has recently appeared from John Lane, The Bodley Head, translated and annotated by John D. Sinclair (10s. 6d. per volume). Only two volumes (*Inferno* and *Purgatorio*) are out at present, but we look forward with keen anticipation to Mr. Sinclair's handling of the third—and in our view, the greatest—section of the work.

The system which has been adopted in these volumes seems admirably calculated to serve the only purpose which such works should serve—to introduce Dante as faithfully as possible to the English reader whose knowledge of Italian is limited. We have then a sound Italian version on the left-hand page, an adequate *prose* translation on the right, notes which are rather on the scanty side, and a commentary which is Mr. Sinclair's most valuable contribution to the work.

As far as the first three items are concerned this edition offers no obvious advantage over the admirable and much cheaper Temple Dante which has for many years initiated numbers of English students of this masterpiece. Indeed, in the notes I consider the Temple series much superior, Mr. Sinclair presuming a fair level of classical and mediæval erudition in his readers. It is the commentary which renders this edition so valuable an adjunct to English students. Mr. Sinclair has read widely in the Italian commentaries and quotes frequently from the best of them. Better still is his power, derived from a great love of the work, to fuse these various views into a whole with his own thought which truly illuminates the text.

There are so many instances of the right thing being said throughout the whole of this commentary that it seems invidious to pick out isolated examples. I shall mention a few which seem to me particularly profound and helpful. There is the note on the meeting of the poets in Limbo—that " the whole scene is Dante's proud assertion to his countrymen and to the world of the height of his own calling and of his fitness for it, and in particular of his revival in verse of the classical standards of order, elevation and dignity. . . . The six converse by themselves, as on themes beyond the crowd. For poetry is more than the poet ; it is the utterance in terms of the imagination of truth which cannot otherwise be known or told and its functions are the loftiest of all that belongs to human speech."

There is Santayana's profound observation on Paolo and Francesca. " Can an eternity of floating on the wind in each other's arms be a punishment for lovers ? That is just what their passion, if left to speak for itself, would have chosen. It is what passion stops at and would gladly prolong for ever. Divine judgment has only taken it at its word. . . . Abandon yourself, Dante would say to us—abandon yourself altogether to a love that is nothing but passion, and you are in Hell already."

There is the significant contrast drawn by Rossi between the arrogance of Farinata and the arrogance of Capaneus. His (the latter's)

is "the impotent fury of the denial of unescapable reality, venting itself in a vain parade of arrogance. Quite other is the greatness of Farinata; that is a moral greatness which rises above the torment of his bed of fire, while confessing to it." Both may be contrasted with Vanni Fucci in the den of thieves, with his "brutal, swaggering, cynical insolence, pluming himself on wearing the halo of his own savagery." Subtle and deeply moving is the interpretation "given by Rossi and some others" of the fact that the river Phlegethon crossing the sandy plain of fire quenches the flames above it: "that this stream of all the tears and blood shed by the whole race of Adam, not being here an instrument of punishment but only an evidence of age-long human agony, softens in its presence the rigour of divine justice. It is the Virgilian sense of tears in mortal things breaking in on the grim consistency of retribution."

The comment on the very difficult symbolism of the cord thrown down into Malebolge to summon Geryon is excellent. It is unfortunately too long to quote in full; but I should like to record the suggestive question with which it closes. "May the discarded cord, 'coiled and knotted together,' represent the challenge which a soul, now secure in its purity and trusting to its reason and conscience, presents to fraud to come out of its hiding and disclose itself for what it is?"

Significant also is the note on Caiaphas, stretched out and crucified on the ground in the slow-moving circle of the hypocrites. "By their deeds Caiaphas and the rest have gibbeted themselves and must be trodden underfoot by the other hypocrites and bear the weight of all *their* shame. The sight and the report were a marvel to Virgil, not intelligible to a pagan and incredible and incomprehensible to sane reason and conscience." Significant also that it was a black cherub that carried Count Guido of Montefeltro to his doom among the evil counsellors. "The 'black cherub' is not merely a devil in general; he is a fallen member of the second order of the angelic hierarchy whose peculiar glory consists in their knowledge of God, that is to say, their intellectual perfection. The black cherubim are fitted as no other devils could be to take to their doom those whose sin has been the abuse and betrayal of the high powers of the mind."

The symbolism of the *Purgatorio*, more difficult than that of the *Inferno*, is treated with deep sympathy and real understanding. I do not think the comment on the lucid beauty of Canto I could be improved. It rightly stresses the intimate imaginative realism of the episode and also the air of rapt mystery which pervades it—Dante's "*silence*, as of a child rapt with wonder, throughout—the sudden, august apparition of the aged Cato—the suspense of Dante's confidence as he follows Virgil down to the lonely shore—and his acceptance, as of a sacrament, of the bathing of his face and the girding with the rush."

Very interesting is the parallel drawn between Dante's experiences

just before reaching the gates of Dis and of Purgatory respectively. In both cases the power of evil is for a time made manifest; in both cases the evil one is repelled by an angelic visitation. In both cases the rescue is accomplished, not by Virgil (human reason and understanding), but by a direct intervention of Heavenly grace. The disablement in both cases is obviously of something which lies beyond reason and conscience. Clearly outside Dis the subterranean terrors and horrors of the self which lies below the threshold are making their last stand against the inroad of light. Here again in the Antepurgatorio, "near the threshold of the true Purgatory of active cleansing, is another angelic deliverance from evil in a region not under control of the will, the region of dream. . . . There are hidden springs of good and evil in the soul—in the unconscious we should now say—which are quite beyond our understanding, and with regard to which, Dante would teach us, the soul's one resource is to wait for God."

The very truth of this makes it the more valuable to affirm, as Mr. Sinclair does, "the fundamental realism of Dante's imagination. He starts from experience and essentially never leaves it. He follows Virgil through the depths of Hell and up the steeps of Purgatory 'con questa vera carne,' as a living man, as Dante Alighieri."

It is not to be supposed that I agree with every comment that Mr. Sinclair makes: I take "very seriously the detailed symbolism of the passage" which closes Purgatorio xxxi from line 90 onwards, and I think many modern readers will do the same. The passage seems to me the very heart of the work; I feel that no word in it, no symbol can be disregarded without loss, as much as I feel that many years of study will still leave further beauties in it to be seen, further depths of meaning to be understood. There are points of translation where I cannot agree with Mr. Sinclair, as "duro" in Inferno iii, 12, which I should translate as "obscure," not "dreadful"; as I certainly think that 'Bene ascolta chi la nota" in Canto xv. commends Dante's speech, not his listening. The author does not seem to me to have made a just estimate of Dante's views about astrology—though perhaps these are made more plain in the *Paradiso*. These divergences are trivial and detract in no way from my admiration of this commentary, which I warmly commend alike to those who may wish to commence the study of Dante, and to those who have already made much or little progress in that fascinating field of research.

T. Weston Ramsey.

A Poet Septuary

Sir Alexander Lawrence, Bart., who formerly held the high office of Solicitor to the Treasury, though his liege-lady was Law, has all his life kept up something more than a flirtation with Poetry. The Oxford University Press have in a handsome volume entitled *Aliunde* and sold at the remarkably moderate price of 5s., sponsored the offspring of this *liaison*. The author's range is wide. He presents

translations from Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Swedish. His renderings from the last three tongues I must take on trust, but in his handling of the others I find many felicitous things and almost nothing to criticize. Perhaps in his charming version of Heine's " Mein Kind, wir waren Kinder " the stanza

We'd sit and talk like grown-up men
Quite serious and say,
With sorrow, how things used to be
Better in our day

might be closer to the spirit of the original if for " with sorrow " words implying complaining or grumbling were substituted. Here is how he translates the famous epitaph on the men who fell at Thermopylae.

To Sparta, friend, a message bear :
Her word was law—and we lie here.

This is a remarkable piece of compression. Those who know the original will recognize that it may, with particular fitness, be termed " laconic."

His rendering of Catullus's Odi et amo. Quare id facio fortasse requiris is similarly pungent :

I hate her, love her. Why ?
I cannot tell.
But so it is and I
Suffer like Hell.

To the innumerable translations of Sappho's " Hymn to Aphrodite " he adds two more, both good. One of them is written in English Sapphics, and to it he appends a stanza in Sapphic Greek, apologizing, quite unjustifiably, for his poor craftsmanship. But he, wisely, does *not* supply a translation of his apology.

His rendering of R. L. Stevenson's " Under the wide and starry sky " seems to me typical of Sir Alexander Lawrence's concise and pointed style, whatever be the language in which he chooses to write. Here is how he turns

Glad did I live and gladly die
And I laid me down with a will.

Laetus vivebam, felix animoque libenti
Vita discedens acriter occubui.

The last two words are masterly.

There must be many readers of THE POETRY REVIEW with the equipment for enjoying a book which is manifestly the work of a witty scholar. To them I commend *Aliunde*.

EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

Dr. A. S. Way goes on untiringly with his self-appointed task of giving renderings, scholarly and readable, into English verse of the best of Greek and Latin poetry. He has just issued (Macmillan, 8s. 6d.) Books V-VII of the *Greek Anthology*.

MODERN AND ANCIENT POETRY

WHAT has suggested that title to me is my having six volumes to speak of, one having *The Auden Age* as the title of its last chapter but one, another containing a scholar's translations of some Greek poems of love and wine, while the other four volumes belong, one to the present time, and the other three to all time, if that is not to pay their authors too great a compliment. The authors of one of them are a multitude of men, as will appear when I come to close quarters with that volume.

Mr. Philip Henderson's *The Poet and Society* (Secker & Warburg, 7s. 6d.) has for six out of its nine chapters, and by this its nature will plainly appear, *Poetry in the Modern World*, *Gerard Manley Hopkins*, *Politics and W. B. Yeats*, *The Agony of Mr. Eliot*, *Beasts and Flowers*, and *The Auden Age*. I read the last chapter with most attention and interest, hoping to have real light thrown for me upon the work of the Auden "age"; for most of all, as a student of English poetry, I should like to be able to lecture on that work. What gradually formed itself in my mind, though it may be that Mr. Henderson did not intend to convey this, was that, Mr. T. S. Eliot having obtained his reputation for what society took as *new*, not traditional, in *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, *The Waste Land*, etc., for all that those writings may not have departed as far from tradition as was thought, the younger men, as under a denaturing shadow, have been put from composing in what would have been their most natural style, and have been forced to experiment in the dark, feeling that their very lives depend on their being *brand new*.

That is how I explain the Auden "age" to myself. How Mr. Henderson does I must show by quoting; for, as I have indicated, I am not too sure that I read successfully between his lines, and I am convinced that that has to be done. Let me then give this from pp 216-7:

> Almost exactly the same attitude, arising from the problems of growing up, may be detected in Cecil Day Lewis's verse. Reviewing his *Collected Poems* 1929-1933, that insulting journal *New Verse* remarked: "If Spender's poems appeal chiefly to girls, it may be said that Day Lewis appeals specially to boys." And certainly his work is as full of trains, ships, aeroplanes, cricketers, bullies, spies and explorers as *The Boy's Own Paper* itself. The trains, however, stand for Socialism and progress, and the mountain-climbers are those who break through glaciers and snowdrifts into the New Country. Lewis keeps his nose pretty close to the ground following Auden, but he had not yet picked up Auden's ability to write prosaically and still be a poet —not that Auden himself is always successful in this by any means. He is, however, a far more sophisticated writer than Lewis, and with him triviality and flatness is evidently a form of *faux naïveté* practised for the fun of the thing, though there are limits to one's enjoyment of this particular kind of fun.

A very striking thing is the fullness and accuracy of Mr. Hender-

son's knowledge of the texts. He is never at a loss, whether the poet is Father Hopkins, Lawrence, or T. S. Eliot, for the right lines to quote. This is very marked in the Hopkins chapter.

In *The Pursuit of Poetry* (Cassell & Co. 10s. 6d.) Mr. Desmond Flower has made *A Book of Letters about Poetry* written by English Poets, 1550-1930, divided into chapters with original and amusing titles. The first title is *From Tudor Rose to Dutch Garden.* All the great letters by the poets themselves about poetry are there, and one has only to state that to disclose how valuable a compilation this handsome volume is. Leigh Hunt comes surprising well out of this inquest. There is a letter of Shelley to him, one from him to Shelley and Mary Shelley, one from him to Tennyson, and one from the Brownings to him, in each case a letter about the art of the poet. Who, by communication, not by intuition, can have known more in his time about poetry? But intuition is what tells most. Some of the editor's comments are superfluous or aggravating—unworthy of his reputation as a critic.

I found Mr. Archibald Macleish's verse play, *Air Raid*, very appealing. If in quoting a passage I do not space the lines as they are spaced in the book (no doubt with effect), it is because in THE POETRY REVIEW there is not room for such a luxury. This is the passage I have chosen:

Our men are on a roof above the houses of the town.
Strange and curious times these times we live in:
You watch from kitchens for the bloody signs:
You watch for breaking war above the washing on the lines.
In the old days they watched along the borders:
They called their warfare in the old days wars
And fought with men and men who fought were killed:
We call it peace and kill the women and the children.
Our women die in peace beneath the lintels of their doors.
We have learned much: civilization had gentled us:
We have learned to take the dying and the wounds without the wars.
Stand by please: we take you through now . . .

The fourth volume comes from America—*Time Strikes* (New York, Columbia University Press. 6s. 6d.) by Edward Ames Richards. It is traditional music, and fine music, as in "Burning":

Burn, my eye, against this burning petal
And push, my hand, against the urgent stem
Though you will not divine the living metal
That holds the vigor and repose of them.

The sunny seed flames in the ground and reaches
Up the air; the seed of sun will glow
To gild the silver armor of the beeches
Or bleach the apple into hanging snow.

But you may never be an inward lover
Nor pry beyond the velvet of the skin
The beech, the rose, the apple wear to cover
The coolness of their face, the fire within.

Mr. J. M. Edmond's *Some Greek Poems of Love and Wine* (Cambridge University Press, 3s. 6d.), is a companion to the author's *Some Greek Poems of Love and Beauty*. He is represented in Dr. Bowra's *Oxford Book of Greek Verse in Translation* by one of the translations here, Another is :

The Moon is gone
And the Pleiads set,
Midnight is nigh ;
Time passes on,
And passes ; yet
Alone I lie.

The Greek is Sappho's. I was reminded by that poem of one by Narottama Dasa, a Vaishnava poet of Bengal. These are its first three verses :

In my pride I built a palace,
And my Lover was to hold me there
In his arms, like wine within a chalice,
All the night long that the Moon made fair.

When the cuckoo callèd with his voice
Unto his mate, I clad myself in robes
Whose colours were to make my Love rejoice,
And so these ornaments and pearly globes.

Someone unknown hath lured my Love away ;
Broken my palace—who could think such sin ?
How shall I live the whole night through till day,
Outside the joy all others pant within ?

The only point in speaking of the Lorelei, in a review of Mr. (or is it Miss ?) Stanley Richardson's *Dark Blue Sunlight* (Bristol : John Wright and Sons, 2s. 6d.), is not that one of the poems bears " Lorelei " as its title. The Lorelei is that siren of the Rhine whose voice lures fishermen to destruction. Her song is of the nature of an incantation or enchantment. Well, one day, looking among the books awaiting review in The Poetry Society's Rooms, I opened a thin, blue-covered volume, and began to read, and was immediately so struck by

Ages ago, in some more fretful spring
Man was born of the earth's suffering.
He feels her faintly still when from the snows
The first white flower of the cold year grows,

and what follows on pp. 9 and 10, that a spell came over me. That is why, too, I am so late in writing this notice ; for, until I had grown

into the poetry, I did not wish to commit myself to the rashness of any judgment concerning it. Of all the poems I now admire " The New Deal " most (only I should prefer another title) : it is just not too long to quote in full :

Youth brooding over encyclopaedias
ponders the eternal Why
of the reason of experience, of our being
out of the nothing's mystery.

Change we, God knows, and the devil urges,
but little man
shall escape never from the cunning cages
held him when he began.

If our nature moves on newer rhythms,
do these attract the less
the morning and the evening of the first day,
to the lips from the hand's press ?

Though the stars swing now in their proper places,
are these less bright
that rise from our bodies' blood together flowing
in love's first wedded night ?

Though hygiene build, science admonish us,
our children still
are fair upon our clouding landscape and
we wish them very well.

Though death is a chemist's decomposition,
it is the same
grave ending of the body's senseless turmoil,
return to whence we came,

if angels by the banisters of glory
catch at the speeding dove,
or if the seed sink back and flourish under,
—all's still despair above.

The reading at the close there is really " all is above despair," and it would have been better to write that, rhyme or none. Similarly, as

Escape, pursuit, pursuit, escape, no more ;
Between them and for ever shut the door,

almost tempts one to read " between " as the imperative of a verb and " shut " as another imperative, it would have been better to construct the sentence otherwise : constructed otherwise, one might know how to construe it. The rest of the book, however, is as good as flawless, if it is not as deeply imaginative on some pages as on most of them.

J. A. Chapman.

POETRY IN CRISIS

There are, Heaven knows, plenty of opportunities for emotion in this uneasy world, but precious little tranquillity in which to recollect it, and the poetry which has sprung directly from the suspense of the last nine months is, as one might expect, febrile, urgent, impressionist, with an atmosphere of scared hurry about it. Mr. Christopher Hassall's recent collection of sonnets (*Crisis*: Heinemann) while more assured than MacNeice's *Autumn Journal*, gives the same impression of having been written in a fever of impatience and excitement. These forty-two sonnets seem to crystallize the meditations of a single tortured day. Sir Time emerging out of his twelve-hour tunnel travels in desperate haste through a dozen moods before the light is switched out and man can " put off his clinging cares And hang them with his clothes." It is, I think, partly the vividness and intensity of the emotion that welds these sonnets into a unity, and partly the continual subtle echoings of mood and allusion—Sonnet XLII recalls VIII, the bats, the " whickering shadows That scribble their initials on the air " in XXXIX remind one of the springtime and the blackbirds with which the book begins ; the opening line, " *I am the Resurrection and the Life* " comes back into the mind with an added force when at the end (for XLII is an epilogue) one finds :

> " *Abide with us, fast falls the eventide—*
> Not on the hills where each material day
> Arrives in opal or concealing gray,
> But on the campus where our passions ride,
> Now foggy with blurred hopes. On every side
> We see such change as makes the good decay :
> What should be steadfast, yields and drops away.
> *The darkness deepens. Lord with us abide.*"

For this is in no sense a sequence, and there is only a surface connection between the majority of the sonnets. The mood of the first six is one of despairing anxiety, hardening and deepening into the anger, the irony, the occasional bitterness of sonnets VII–XXIII and thence changing gradually to a passionate pity, to stoicism, till at the very end there is a hint of something more than the courage of mere acceptance. These are precisely the emotional experiences a man might travel through in the course of an evening's reverie ; and *Crisis* reflects the reactions of a sincere, sensitive and passionate mind to a cycle of such moods.

Mr. Hassall's verse has a deceptive solidity and ease. We are accustomed to have our emotions concentrated for us in highly coloured bottles ; deafened by the wireless, the cinema, the poster, we find it harder and harder to hear any poetry that neither bellows in our ears nor kicks us heavily in the pit of the stomach. But *Crisis* gains its effect without trickery, without the use of those " unexpected " adjectives or camera-angles of vision which are for a while so exciting and in the end a mere irritant. *Crisis* reveals the same astonishing

wealth of imagery that enriched *Penthesperon*, but here it is never merely playful or decorative. The "ingenuity" and the sometimes over-elaborated conceits of the earlier poem are controlled and shaped partly by emotional intensity and partly (no doubt) by the fact that a sonnet only has fourteen lines.

"*I am the Resurrection and the Life*,
Sings the horse-chestnut as she drapes her bones.
Lost meadows push against the paving-stones,
While in the graveyard on their startled fife
Blackbirds are setting all the epitaphs
To music."

Here is, unmistakably, a style, an individual: that odd, vivid crystallization of metaphor, the Hassall accent—

"Just beyond
This wall stand grave-stones, their unwritten backs
Turned on the sunset for the dawn to study
Their Gothic menu-cards."

But it is no longer that gay wantoning with words that was so delightful in the facts and fantasies of *Penthesperon*. The occasional crudity, impetuosity and raggedness of these sonnets is a deliberate device to heighten the effect of the stress under which they were composed. So also is the continual undercurrent of contrast—the farm with its blue meadows under an arch of death, the silver tea-pot and the June roses that defy the menace of the bombs, the horrors of Spain shattered into tranquillity by one lovely line from Pope. Not less remarkable than this variety of theme is the variety of treatment, and the experiments with the sonnet form. Mr. Hassall's technique reminds me strongly of the passionate colloquialism of Wilfred Scawen Blunt; he has adopted Belloc's suggestive use of the refrain, played some interesting tricks with assonance and written at least one completely successful unrhymed sonnet—the only other example of which I know is Keats' sonnet to John Hamilton Reynolds.

There are not more than half a dozen of these sonnets that fail to catch alight, and the only way in which a critic can do anything like justice to the remainder is by quoting them in full. Here is one, chosen more or less at random.

"Look at the searchlights! There's a fire in heaven,
And we have turned our hoses on the sky.
Look at that flock of birds, daring to fly
Across the luminous torrent, never driven
To earth, but coming thickly on in tens,
Twenties and hundreds, silvering overhead.
—Your dare-all birds are aeroplanes, I said,
Whose passengers are heavy fountain-pens.
—What will they write?
Death-warrants.

Who must die?
Since you demand an answer: You and I.
My friend grew pale. Is this our Judgement-Day?
How have we sinned? How have these Things intruded
On our sweet sleep? Who made them, anyway?
Startled, we both replied together—YOU DID."

It will be sufficient to indicate the mastery of form, the easy yet passionate utterance, the sense of drama and the profound sincerity which have made *Crisis* so far the most significant commentary our present discontents have produced.

RONALD FULLER.

A SHEAF OF REMINISCENCES

The poet in prose is on parade, presenting his reminiscences and diverse impressions of life in a more mobile medium than verse. One is our good friend Captain Henderson Bland, with a handsome volume (Heath Cranton, 12s. 6d.) that has had well deserved publicity, including a shopwindow display at Selfridges. *Actor; Soldier; Poet* defines the contents and scope of this succinct chronicle. The author, associated with Tree during a very crowded and fascinating period, recalls amongst other incidents the production of "Paolo and Francesca" "in which Henry Ainley as Paolo stepped into fame overnight." Poetry, however, has been the chief interest and sustaining power in the life of this cultured man of action. A sheaf of representative poems is harvested in the concluding section of this volume together with an admirable article on the poetic temperament, reprinted from THE POETRY REVIEW. We would like to have heard in more detail of Captain Henderson Bland's varied experiences, especially in the United States, where he lived for some time, published verse, came into contact with many well known people and every day for three months read poetry over the radio for the National Broadcasting Company.

Of a similar nature but much more voluminous is the *Autobiography with Letters* of another old friend and Vice-President of The Poetry Society, William Lyon Phelps (Oxford University Press, 15s.). In a thousand excellently printed demy 8vo pages, Dr. Phelps, who has become an American institution, reveals his genius for friendship, his ability to find and evoke the best in his fellowmen and racily retells many apt stories. Our chief concern in these very full and disarming revelations of a happy life is in the author's poetic contacts. Very pertinent at the moment is the reminder of his devotion to Robert Browning who figures on almost a hundred pages. In a short chapter devoted to him, Dr. Phelps admits that "Inasmuch as I have read books since I was four years old, it is natural enough that various authors have profoundly affected my mind and character. I have already expressed something of the debt I owe to Shakespeare, to John Stuart Mill, to Carlyle, to Tennyson's *Maud*, to Goethe, to

Schopenhauer ; to the Authorized Version of the Bible it is impossible to express similar indebtedness. The individual authors just mentioned came at a time in my boyhood and adolescence when they supplied what was needed ; but the Bible was from the start an integral part of myself ; and it would be absurd to attempt an estimate of what I owe to it as it would be to appraise what I owe to my lungs or to my heart," but " it was the influence of Browning's poetry that became paramount." His view of life irresistibly appealed to me. So far as a humble individual can share the philosophy of a mighty genius, Browning's philosophy is my own ; his ways are my ways and his thoughts are my thoughts. He was and is for me what Bentham was for Mill. I am a Browningite. . . . A great deal of my *happiness* I owe to Browning. It was natural, therefore, as soon as I became free to teach at Yale what I wanted to teach, that I should have devoted more time to the teaching of Browning than to any other author. From 1898 to 1933, I had the pleasure of introducing the poetry of Browning into the lives of hundreds of young men ; and while naturally not all of them shared my enthusiasm, a large number of them kept up their reading of Browning in after years. It has been good for them, as it was for me."

Naturally Dr. Phelps has been on many Browning pilgrimages, verifying the places the poet so definitely describes, " ' those lancet windows' jewelled miracle ' in the cathedral at Arezzo, and Caponsacchi's church Santa Maria della Pieve. In Florence I wished to repeat as definitely as possible Browning's experience when he found the Old Yellow Book which was to produce such a tremendous impact on his mind and to give the world the incomparable *Ring and the Book*," reliving and retracing the famous introduction, as we did more recently. Of Browning's only child, who was born in Florence in 1849 and died at Asolo in 1912, Dr. Phelps says that as an artist " he might have reached a high reputation if he had not carried the burden of his parents' fame. When I visited the Pallazzo Rezzonico in Venice, the house where his father died, the rooms on the top floor were filled with large paintings by the son, some of them beautiful and interesting, but without any striking originality. I saw there, too, the original pen-and-ink sketch of Tennyson reading *Maud*, made by Dante Rossetti on that memorable evening in London, in 1855, when the Tennysons, the Brownings, Dante and William Rossetti were gathered together in an upper room. Tennyson, with one leg curled under him on the sofa, chanted *Maud*, the tears running down his cheeks ; and Browning read *Fra Lippo Lippi*, both poems published that year." Browning's son fiercely resented Chesterton's statement that the poet was in weak health and declining in his last years. On the contrary, and this is most pertinent at the moment when we are considering the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Browning's death, " he insisted that Browning was tremendously vigorous up to the last ; that no change had taken place in his appearance,

manner, or habits. He had caught a bad cold walking on the Lido, but refused to take proper care of himself. Instead of staying in, he set out for long tramps with friends, constantly talking in the raw autumn air. While suffering with this heavy cold, he ran rapidly up flights of stairs, the son vainly trying to restrain him. The result was bronchitis with heart trouble, and he died at ten in the night of 12 December, 1889. That very afternoon he had risen from bed and walked about the room. During the last few days he told many good stories and talked with the utmost vivacity."

" Robert Browning inherited excellent health from his father, who died at the age of eighty-four, without ever having known a day's illness. Mr. Barrett Browning told me that until the last sickness he had never seen the poet in bed during the daytime. He had a truly wonderful digestion; it was his firm belief that one should eat only what one really enjoyed, desire being that infallible sign that the food was healthful. 'My father was a man of bonne fourchette; he was not very fond of meat, but liked all kinds of Italian dishes, especially with rich sauces. He always ate freely of rich and delicate things. He could make a whole meal off mayonnaise.' I reminded him that Emerson used to eat pie for breakfast. Both men were optimists."

We have all heard, although I am afraid few of us are members, of the Fano Club, founded by Dr. Phelps in Fano on Easter Day, 1912, standing before Guercino's *Guardian Angel* in the Church of San Agostino. " Anyone could become a life member by doing three things. One must visit Fano. One must see the picture. One must send me a picture postcard postmarked Fano. . . . Sending Americans to Fano has been, I think, one of the major achievements of my life."

Browning is linked with Hardy by Dr. Phelps recounting how the late Mrs. Hardy told him that, in his last illness, Thomas Hardy asked her to read to him *Rabbi Ben Ezra*. She paused in the middle, but he signalled to her to read it to the end.

Among contemporaries there are references to Mr. Alfred Noyes in this opinionary volume, including a confirmation of our frequently expressed opinion that " many poets confine their public appearance to reading their own work, often very badly. The best public reader of his own poems I have ever heard is Alfred Noyes." This opinion is repeated later with the addition " I have heard him many times and his work always gained by his public interpretation."

Of Æ, Dr. Phelps say that " never have I heard talk that combines so much learning, intelligence and charm. . . . Æ's voice was of a triple softness. It was an Irish voice, that seemed to come through the fogs and mists of his native land. This softness was further softened by his copious beard; the voice came sifting through the whiskers. It was further softened by clouds of tobacco smoke, for he was a chronic pipe-smoker. . . . On this ninth day of February

1928 he talked to me for ten hours ; and I could have heard him till his voice gave out. . . . He said that narrative poetry, no matter how good, was always second rate, because it was on one plane. The highest form of poetry was always the poetry of transfiguration. I immediately asked him to read one of his poems, which he did, chanting it with a rhythm that will be remembered by thousands of people ; for whether on platform or in an armchair, he had only one way of repeating verse ; it would have been monotonous from any other man. It is amazing that he remembered every line of verse he had written."

In this vast collection there is little that is really trivial or unamusing, but there are a few such banalities, an " amusing " statement by Robert Nichols for instance.

D'Arcy Cresswell is described as a New Zealand poet with a passionate faith in poetry. He holds that man first made himself articulate through poetry, and that poetry is in itself an end towards which the best in man is striving. Nine years ago he published *The Poet's Progress*, telling of his early experiences in selling his poems from door to door throughout the country ; in *Present Without Leave* (Cassell, 7s. 6d.) he resumes this narrative of salesmanship to celebrities in England, who did their best to make him a celebrity also. He quickly became familiar with Arnold Bennett, " Eddie " Marsh, " Bill" Rothenstein, " Coie " Lane, " Jim " Ede, " the Morrells, " Conti " Sitwell and various peers and peeresses, so many of the latter that his friends used to ask him if he had added any more Countesses to his list, altogether, apparently, being a success in England in this particular limited set. In consequence this opinionative record is dull and exceedingly personal and unimportant and disappointing. Volumes of callow reminiscences are unfortunately too common but most of them have more justification and far more amusement than this particular volume.

" The purity of style," like the grammar which Arnold Bennett corrected, is occasionally slipshod and various inaccuracies require correction. He is evidently too intimate with " Dick de la Mare " to get his name correctly, turning the Latin word into French, and so carelessly familiar with *Cristabel's* Lord Ronald de Vaux as to describe him as Sir Ronald de Veaux, another frenchification.

Sir John Squire's meanderings in *Water Music* (Heineman, 10s. 6d.) are of a different calibre—mellow and mature, judicious and entertaining, the assured ramblings of an experienced and cultured man, as welcome and as satisfying as the claret he found at Blackpool. Whatever hare is started is worth following, whether he is describing a local scene or ruminating on things remembered. He seems more genial now that he has escaped from the squirearchy and less pontifical than when a reviewer. He can even comment on the Sunday reviewer, as when his companion asks him what on earth could he make of a review

of some verse in a superior weekly " all too characteristic of contemporary reviews in that it aired the reviewer's opinions without quoting anything to show the quality of the author reviewed. But quoted with admiration approaching awe were two excerpts from Mr. T. S. Eliot—one about the ' damp souls of housemaids ' and one in which the evening was compared to a patient lying anaesthetized upon a table. ' As if God Almighty made sunsets for that ' exploded Bliss, ' damn it all, Squire, you've read these moderns and I haven't ; what do they do it for ? '

" ' Don't lump them all together just because the press does,' I said, ' those sentences at least are not obscure and pretentious gibberish. And they aren't really typical. They date from his early period when he was a depressed and frustrated romantic. He is a churchwarden now. Anyhow the proper way in which to regard it is as urban and local, a sort of peevish vers-de-société.'

" ' Vers-de-société be hanged ! ' ejaculated Bliss, ' the chap ought to have a good dinner or go canoeing or something. If you want vers-de-société give me Horace. I should like,' he went on bitterly, ' to translate Horace into Eliotese. I thought it a good idea and made a note of it."

Later another book reviewer drew him back to this subject. " I found a solemn examination of verses which seemed to me cacophonous gibberish. ' What on earth is happening ? ' I asked myself, as somebody asks me about once a week. ' What ; and why? ' What is happening ? One plays with theories about religious decay, politics, economics, urbanization, to account for the occlusion of style and manners, the ear and the heart, in so much literature and painting. What accounts for the shades of the prison-house closing in so much more severely than of old? The worse things are, the greater, surely, should be the consolations of sound, imagery and pure love. Don't boys muse as they did, or do they forget later ? " It must be a pure pleasure to take " a pint of Sir Archibald " in the company of Sir. John.

Another excellent example of the genre is *Suffolk Scene* (Blackie, 8s. 6d.) in which Julian Tennyson, a greatgrandson of Alfred, describes intimately and in beautiful prose his own corner of East Anglia and his experiences therein—really a difficult theme if, as Mr. Tennyson asserts, " Suffolk is a disconcerting country as full of surprises as a Christmas stocking . . . to my mind its beauty rests with three things : the wealth of trees, the size of hedges and the shape of fields."

Two poets occupy a part of a chapter on the fame of Suffolk. One is Crabbe who " saw beyond the landscape, saw beyond the beauty," and although a man of sympathy and understanding, was actually a grim realist. As Mr. Tennyson observes, " it is not for nothing that Byron called him Nature's sternest and yet the best." The other is Edward Fitzgerald, the " dear old Fitz " of Tennyson, who lived eccentrically near Woodbridge and wrote verses that have not attained the fame of his version of Omar.

Not every modern biographer ennobles the subject of his study with a sonnet as Mr. Charles Richard Cammell does in *The Great Duke of Buckingham* (Collins, 21s.).

> If earthly love be Heaven's own gift: if Fate
> Takes early whom God loves, this man was great.

Mr. Cammell insists in his introduction that Arts and Letters are the beginning and end of all progress and in these days of muddled economic theories and the ever thickening cloud of political jargon it is refreshing to be able to turn to a writer who so unflinchingly defends this opinion. It is a strange coincidence that the first and only contemporary biographer of the first Duke of Buckingham should also have been a poet, Sir Henry Wotton, our Ambassador to the Venetian Republic and Provost of Eton, whose death was celebrated by Abraham Cowley with an Elegy. The very first sentence is a challenge "Personality is more permanent than achievement," and the whole book is enlivened and given vitality by the rapier thrusts of Mr. Cammell's comments and comparisons with the actualities of our own times. There are perhaps, however, too many long quotations from contemporary authors, letters given in full where partial extracts would have been sufficient. These often make heavy going and repetitions from more than one source tend to hold up the development of the story. For the life of George Villiers was a drama. He was one of those legendary figures of Greek tragedy placed in the fantastic and flamboyant setting, the gorgeous pageantry of one of the great periods of European artistic history. And it is here that the author's familiarity with the arts and letters of the age serves him in delineating a scene whose every detail is so full of colour and interest It was a time when kings were poets and poets the friends of kings, when the favourite entertainment of the wealthy was the mascarade. At Buckingham's command Ben Jonson composed the Masque of the Metamorphosed Gipsies, one of his most brilliant works in that kind. The Marquess, as he then was, himself appeared in the rôle of Captain of the Gispies. The king was no mean poet either. When Baby Charles and his faithful dog Steenie rode to Madrid to fetch the Infanta, one of the most extraordinary escapades in history, James wrote a long poem, of which

> Love is a world of many Spains
> Where coldest hills and hottest plains
> With barren rocks and fertile fields
> By turns despair and comfort yields.

is worthy of preservation.

But this world of princely magnificence and romantic adventure had, as most worlds have, its reverse side. The corruption of the great families, the scandals of a court where nepotism and jockeying for position were a necessity of life made poison and the assassin's blade as natural a factor as it was in Renaissance Italy. One cannot

help feeling though that it is when James, the canny Scot, for all his curious learning and interest in witches and diabolism, lets go the reins of power it is then that Buckingham, unrestrained by the negative character of Charles, throws himself into the policy which ruined his prestige and popularity, or was it the desperation of an unhappy soul, the tragedy of hopeless love for the pathetic Anne of Austria, Queen of France? It was a tenpenny knife, bought in a by-Cutler's shop of Tower Hill by Felton, the disappointed soldier, which rings down the curtain on the final scene. The funeral of the great Duke was solemnized in a poor and confused fashion at dead of night with armed train bands to prevent the possible fury of the populace, enraged at the favourite's failure and extravagance. But he was buried in the chapel of Henry VII in the Abbey reserved for the royal house. Carew, the poet, who had owed much to him in his lifetime, wrote his epitaph. In a mural inscription he is styled " The Enigma of the World." He certainly astonished it.

The book is profusely illustrated with no less than fifteen portraits of Buckingham and a beautiful production save for a few typographical errors particularly in proper names as Lord Herbert of Cherburg, Madame de Deffand. If it is more an elogium than a work of critical assessment the fault is one which we do not too much deplore. In an age when petty criticism of small men seeks to debase the fame of their betters, to detract and diminish to the dead level of a so-called realism, with a poet like Mr. Cammell, who is bold enough to sing the glories man wrests from a heartless and sordid world and the splendour of dreams wrought into living reality by the tragic grandeur of the great in soul, we do not wish to cavil.

It seems strange that for fifty years the official life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow by his brother Samuel has stood as the one source of information concerning the great American poet. Now Lawrence Thompson in his *Young Longfellow 1807–1843* (Macmillan 20s.) shows that the popular conception of the poet based on that Life is an imperfect and distorted picture: " The idea of Longfellow as a man singularly blessed by fortune and immune to trial and troubles is not borne out by the well documented discoveries which the author's research has brought forth." We are told more intimate details of his life, of his seemingly hopeless passion for the beautiful Frances Appleton when he : " indiscreetly dared to assume the rôle of a pale American Byron, bearing the ' pageant of his bleeding heart ' across Europe, in the pages of *Hyperion* " ; and of his struggle for literary recognition. He overheard friends adversely criticizing his first published poem—a contribution to the *Portland Gazette*—and cried himself to sleep, but was not discouraged. Soon he was contributing to the United States *Literary Gazette* whose editor wrote him : " . . . almost all the poetry we print is sent gratis, and we have no general rule or measure of payment. But the beauty of your poetry makes

me wish to obtain your regular aid. Will you be good enough to let me know how large and how frequent contributions it will be agreeable to you to furnish us, and what mode or amount of compensation you would desire." His first volume of original poems—*Voices of the Night*—sold 43,000 copies, and there, at the beginning of his success Lawrence Thompson leaves him. We can only wish that he will continue with an account of the poet's later life.

That the islands of the Atlantic are the mountain tops of a continent buried beneath the ocean by some volcanic catastrophe many thousands of years ago is a theory which seems to attract a number of people. They base their belief on certain similarities between the cultures of the American continent and Egypt and Asia, giving the name of Atlantis to the lost land and peopling it with a race drawing most of its characteristics from a rather highly coloured imagination. But as Mr. MacBride tells us in his preface to *A Message From The Gods* (Rider, 5s.), for the purposes of the theatre it really doesn't matter whether the bottom of the Atlantic was ever high above the waves or has been in its present position since the beginning of time. He describes his work as an Ancient Pre-Christian Ritual Drama. The action centres round the love of the Magi King's daughter for the Sun God who is sacrificed every year by the priests. She saves him from this death and he is initiated into the Greater Mysteries of the Magi which, in spite of a lavish use of capital letters, remains vague and unspecified. Mr. MacBride hopes, however, to quote again his preface, the very fact that such a system has now been revealed should make the decadent religions, divided churches, and disputing sects of this world sit up and take note.

The play is in blank verse with some prose in the third act, and in the final scene there is a not very happy transition to rhymed couplets—of which one rhyme at least is false. The effect desired is evidently one of a weird remoteness from reality, as the author uses the word weird very frequently. Unfortunately it is one of those words which lose all value with constant repetition. This is the third edition. The first appeared in 1910 at a date so rich in forgotten verse plays that we must ask ourselves if there are not others worthy of revival.

The little poems in *Sussex Secrets* by Elizabeth Barrett (Baxter, Lewes, 1s.) have very charming photographic illustrations. They are written in a style that is both delicate and whimsical and the book should make an attractive " card " at Christmas for those who know and love this county.

The *Intimate Poems* of Margaret Joyce Turton (P.T. 1s. 6d.) are presumably written more for private circulation than a general public. They are mostly on a personal note, and though the sentiments are of a general character and of undoubted sincerity, they are hardly

distinctive enough in treatment to hold the attention of the outsider. But when the author takes an impersonal theme, as she does in "Rhythm," she treats it with a more arresting thought, thereby making a wider appeal:

All is rhythm, ebb and flow,
Revolving seasons, day and night—
The tides of seas that come and go,
The patterned way the branches grow,
The swooping birds their circling flight
And dancers as they bend and sway,
The song of birds, and music gay,
And light and shade of summer's day.

Two Anthologies of particular interest are drawn from limited sources. *The Singing Quill* (The Presbyterian Poetry Society of Ohio) is the concerted effort of that Society whose talent and enthusiasm are abundant in its pages. It is very invidious to select any one poem for quotation, but "The Egoist" by Frank David Harris struck me as giving the right note of healthy criticism and is of careful versification:

The cock arose while it was dark,
And crowed aloud with all his might:
"I am the one who bids the sun
Arise and put the night to flight!"

But one dark morning, when he rose,
His noble throat was sore. Oh, shame!
He could not call the sun at all;
But just the same, it came.

First Fruits (C.U.P., 3s. 6d.) is an interesting gesture of the educational authorities to encourage imaginative talent in the elementary schools. Contributors, whose ages range from five to fourteen years were unaware that their school essays, poems and drawings were ever to be used in this way. They are full of the naïvety and spontaneousness that are the most attractive quality in children's work, and also show a marked intelligence in the use of language. One is of course delighted to find one's own town represented, and Chesham is well represented at that by two good pieces of prose. The punctuation is in most cases logically helpful, though in others it is unfortunately lacking. So much can be done with a mere comma: stopping is the easiest shorthand ever invented. It is a good sign when the study of English has been made effective, as in this book. These young authors are the potential readers and perhaps even writers of tomorrow.

In *Sentiment and Greeting Card Publishers* (Spearman, 3s. 6d.), Aida Reubens gives a comprehensive list of Greeting Card calendar

post-cards, art and other publishers with nearly 200 names and addresses of firms specializing in this type of work, and useful practical information on its marketing.

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MARGUERITE EDGELOW'S THOUGHTS DURING A DRIVE HOME THROUGH THE RAIN AFTER SEEING A PERFORMANCE OF "OTHELLO" AT STRATFORD with the members of the Buckinghamshire Centre of The Poetry Society :

The narrow road flees through a wind-blurred world
And steel-fine rain slides down a wall of cloud.
The silver foil of Sharedeloes is hid
Under the dripping boughs of sycamores,
Where over distant fields peewits tumble
Light as blown, sodden scraps of burnt paper
That a lover tears across in anger
And flings away—then instantly regrets . . .
The Moor's mad words run shrieking through my mind,
That painted canvas, on which every hand
Must leave its mark. Round me, I too can sense
Wild doubt's uneasy twilight creeping on . . .
They nothing truly see who nothing feel.

* * * * *

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW.

SIR,—I do not wish to condemn modern poetry, or criticize it unsympathetically, for I am most interested in it. But frankly, some of the poems appearing in the current number of THE POETRY REVIEW urge me to comment upon them. They strike me as obscure, affected, and lacking in rhythm. I believe in encouraging every young poet (Con Harvey is surely a young writer ?) but in the poem "Fata Morgana" there is confusion of metaphor, and over elaboration. McCallum Smith's poem "To Marguerite" is involved, obscure, and affected. Simplicity and sincerity seem to be considered out of date. I know how easy it is to be tempted to use a line that creates an effect, although to be honest to oneself it is not one's genuine feeling, nor the expression of that real spirit which is the essence of poetry.

I notice that the poems selected to be read for the Rawnsley Gold Medal were not those of the very modern school. Yet why, if the modern poetry, with its obscurity, appeals to the young, as I am told it does, is it not expounded by them ? Is the answer that it lacks rhythm and simplicity of thought and expression ? Yes, I should like to hear Spender, Auden, McNiece recited or read at a poetry recital, for that would be an excellent test of the genuineness of their work.

This letter is in a sense an interrogation. I should be glad to hear what others think.

Yours truly, THEODORA ROSCOE.

Chalfont St. Peter, July 9th.

LORD TENNYSON AT ALDWORTH

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S 2ND PILGRIMAGE

WE are indebted to the *Farnham Herald* for a very complete and accurate report of The Poetry Society's second visit to Aldworth on July 8th as the guests of H.H. The Maharajah of Baroda, a visit distinguished by three notable features—a full and intimate description of his grandfather's associations with Aldworth by Mr. Charles Tennyson, the reproduction of Tennyson's voice in the room in which he worked and a distinctive tribute to his immortal memory by Mr. Alfred Noyes :

When The Poetry Society last visited Aldworth fifteen years ago they were favoured with the warm sunshine of a rare July day, but the visitors on Saturday were not so lucky, for constant showers of rain kept them for the most part to the house, still largely isolated from the outside world, and very much limited the opportunities for an inspection of the charming and well kept gardens and grounds. Some of the places more especially loved by Tennyson were, however, examined with much interest, and Mr. Charles Tennyson, grandson of the poet, who was in general charge of the proceedings, explained his grandfather's association with the property and directed attention to some of the interesting features in the house and grounds.

With Mr. Charles Tennyson—son of Mr. Lionel Tennyson, the youngest son of the poet—were two of his sons, Mr. Julian Tennyson, whose book, *Suffolk Scene*, has lately been favourably noticed in the Press, and Mr. Penrose Tennyson, the youngest film director in England. Other members of the Tennyson family present included the Hon. Harold Tennyson (son of the present Lord Tennyson), Miss Tennyson Jesse (a great-great-niece of the poet) and Mrs. Julian Tennyson.

Mr. Charles Tennyson, in the course of his remarks, said Tennyson went to Aldworth for a reason which might seem strange to modern ears—to avoid publicity. Since his settlement at Farringford, in the Isle of Wight, in 1853, he had, mainly through the publication of the *Idylls of the King* of 1859 and the "Enoch Arden" volume of 1864, acquired a prestige and position which it was hard for our sophisticated age to realize. His personality became a source of boundless interest and curiosity which, ironically enough, his almost morbid hatred of personal publicity only served to aggravate. At the same time, a change had been taking place in the condition of the Isle of Wight. When Tennyson first went to Freshwater in 1853 the place was absolutely remote. There was only one boat a day from the mainland, and to catch this the traveller had to hire a fly at Brockenhurst Station and drive the six or seven miles to Yarmouth. Even this one boat did not wait for passengers from the railway, and when the Tennysons went to take possession of Farringford they missed it, and had to cross the Solent in a rowing boat with their servants.

The west end of the Island was very much as it had been in the

eighteenth or even seventeenth century. It was innocent of hotels or lodginghouses, and there was hardly a house or a cottage less than 100 years old. But with the improvement of railway facilities Freshwater soon began to grow into a holiday resort. Visitors flocked to it, and their curiosity was insatiable. They peered over the park gates and fences of Farringford. They sneaked into the garden and hid in the bushes—they even climbed the trees and lurked in the branches, and, of course, they mobbed the poet when he walked abroad. This, and the development of a tendency to hay-fever, at last persuaded him to look for a summer resort elsewhere, and the fondness of his wife for heathery country and open views suggested the neighbourhood of Liphook and Haslemere as likely to be suitable.

He received great help in his search for a site from Ann Gilchrist, widow of the biographer of William Blake, and herself a writer of distinction. She was at that time living at Haslemere. In September, 1866, the poet and his wife drove over from Petersfield to visit her and she took them to see a site at the Devil's Jumps, where there was an estate of 90 naked and windswept acres for sale for £1,400. On inspection, Tennyson found the land " very dear at the money "—remarking, with his usual solid common sense—" What is the use of a number of acres if they won't grow anything ? " Mrs. Gilchrist, recording this, her first introduction to him, describes him as " Every inch a king. Features massive, eyes very grave and penetrating, hair long, still very dark and, though getting thin, falling in such a way as to give a peculiar beauty to the mystic head." As for his personality, " one feels, somehow," she wrote, " singularly happy and free from constraint in his presence, a sense of a beneficent, generous, nobly humane nature combined with his intellectual greatness."

Soon afterwards the Tennysons took a house at Haslemere, Stoatley Farm, for a short period, to enable them to look around and see how the climate suited them. " He is very anxious this should not be known," writes Mrs. Gilchrist, " and a paragraph in the *Athenæum* would disgust him with the whole project." The result was the discovery in the summer of 1867 of the site where the house now stands—36 acres of land, including Roundhurst Farm below and the fields adjoining it. The estate was then known as Greenhill or Black Horse Copse. The site was a marvellously beautiful one and its wildness and remoteness no doubt gave it an added charm in Tennyson's eyes. There was no road over Blackdown, and the visit was made in an odd procession ; the youngest child, Lionel, on a donkey with a lady's saddle, the poet's wife drawn by a pony in a basket chaise, and the rest walking. The ruts on the track were often so deep that the wheels spun round on the axles without touching the bottom and the chaise had to be lifted and carried by hand. Negotiations for the purchase were commenced immediately, and Mrs. Gilchrist recorded that when the bargain was completed Tennyson's delight was unbounded,

manifesting itself in a sort of beautiful and childlike glee that contrasted curiously with his Saturnine moods.

Then came the problem of plans and building. The poet and his wife had very definite ideas of what they wanted, but were not in touch with any architect. However, on June 16th, 1867, Tennyson chanced to meet on Haslemere Station platform James Knowles, a young man (afterwards founder of *The Nineteenth Century*), who had called on him some time before at Farringford. Knowles spoke to the poet, who immediately said: "You're an architect, aren't you? You had better build my house on Blackdown." Knowles was immediately taken off to lunch and left that afternoon with Tennyson's rough sketches and plans to put into shape. The foundation stone was laid on Shakespeare's birthday, April 23rd, 1868, the inscription chosen by the poet for the stone being "Prosper thou the work of our hands, oh prosper thou our handiwork." The house, which was christened "Aldworth," after the Berkshire village of which his wife's family had been squires for generations, was finished in the summer of the following year, and Tennyson took possession. With what Lady Dorothy Neville described as "the characteristic insouciance of genius," he had omitted to make any arrangement for a carriage road and found himself virtually imprisoned. However, after some negotiation, Lord Egmont, the owner of the surrounding land, gave permission for a road to be made. The poet was delighted with his new home. It was a new experience to live in God-like isolation—without even a postal service—on an olympus from which he could gaze over thirty miles of rolling plain, now chequered with sun and shadow, now flooded with brilliant moonlight, now darkened with rolling storm clouds and lit from end to end with lightning.

Aldworth never during his lifetime lost its isolation. The long steep drive from Haslemere was its salvation. Even in his (the speaker's) recollection the letters were brought out once daily from Haslemere by special messenger—a half-witted old woman who was given her dinner and then trudged back again. In consequence, the place always maintained its charm for the poet. For the rest of his life he came regularly to Aldworth in June and stayed till October or November. The change of climate greatly benefited his health and the proximity to London enabled him much more frequently to visit and to entertain his London friends and such neighbours as George Eliot and G. H. Lewes at Witley, Lord Selborne at Petersfield and, later, Professor Tyndall on Hindhead, and Frederick Harrison at Blackdown House.

Aubrey de Vere had happily described the new home and the society which was to grace it: "The second home was as well chosen as the first. It lifted England's great poet to a height from which he could gaze on a large portion of that English land which he loved so well, see it basking in its most affluent summer beauty, and only bounded by the inviolate sea. Year after year he trod its two stately

terraces with men the most noted of their time, statesmen, warriors, men of letters, science and art, some of royal race, some famous in far lands, but none more welcome to him than the friends of his youth. Nearly all of those were taken from him by degrees; but many of them stand successively recorded in his verse. The days which I passed there yearly with him and his were the happiest days of each year. They will retain a happy place in my memory during whatever short period my life may last; and the sea-murmurs of Freshwater will blend with the sighing of the woods around Aldworth, for me, as for many more worthy, a music, if mournful, yet full of consolation." There is no doubt that this closer contact with the intellectual life of London, combined with the stimulating climate of Aldworth, greatly invigorated Tennyson's mind and assisted him to maintain that wonderful poetic vigour which continued to the last year of his long life.

Externally the life at Aldworth was quiet and regular. Tennyson breakfasted at eight, then smoked his pipe (generally a clay with birds-eye tobacco or shag) and worked till 10.30 or 11 in his library looking southward over Sussex. Then he walked until two, when he had lunch. The afternoon was generally spent on one of the smaller lawns, which he had cut out of the surrounding copse like small green parlours. There he would read aloud to his wife or entertain guests from the neighbourhood or from London. Dinner was at seven, and was marked by one particular ceremony. Dessert was always set out in the ante-room, between the dining-room and drawing-room, and opened into both. Mr. Tennyson suspected this was a feature of the poet's own planning. After dinner he and whoever was dining with him adjourned to this ante-room and there he drank his pint of port—after which he retired again to his library to smoke his pipe and work. Sometimes at 10 o'clock or later a favoured guest was invited to join him upstairs and he would smoke and talk till midnight or after.

The laying-out and development of the estate and gardens were a constant source of pleasure to him. He had two summerhouses built, one for use when the wind was in the west and one to give shelter from the east. As the years drew on and his walks had to be shortened, he sat more and more in these. The eastern summerhouse looked over the Sussex Weald to Leith Hill and the Kentish Downs; the western, along Blackdown to Haslemere and Hindhead. He loved to walk along the ridge of Blackdown to what was then called the Temple of the Winds—the westernmost outpost of the Down; when his walks had to be curtailed he liked best to pass through the green door at the west end of the garden, along the edge of the larch wood to the bubbling stream, where the forget-me-nots grew and by the oak-wood of what he used to call his demon-haunted hill. Although, said Mr. Tennyson, he hardly remembered him before his seventy-fifth year, when he was only six, he could recall walking with him by both these ways, and he remembered very vividly seeing him on the lawn

playing with his Siberian wolfhound, Karenina, throwing his great cape-cloak over her like a retiarius, as she danced round him springing from side to side.

Until weakened by the serious illness which seized him in 1889, the year in which, on his eightieth birthday, he planted the blue Colorado pine in the garden, he scarcely ever gave up his walk, whatever the weather, and would trudge through the heaviest rain, stopping every now and then to shake the water from his black wideawake hat and long cloak, like a great Newfoundland dog. In later years, when the weather was bad, he used to walk up and down the porch or the inner hall, and he could remember very clearly his tall, bearded figure, stooping somewhat with age and the curious shuffling step which, in spite of his great activity, seems to have marked his gait all through life. This fondness for walking was a very important factor in his poetic development. Though he lived all his life in the country he never engaged in any form of sport or played any out-of-door game. For seventy years or so he spent his leisure walking about the country-side, studying nature and taking in and recording impressions. He was botanist, naturalist, geologist and artist all in one, and so deep was his interest in nature that he never tired of his neighbourhood, finding always something new in the infinite variations of the seasons and the climate.

Of course, he sometimes drove further afield. Waggoners Wells beyond Hindhead and the Silent Pool at Albury being favourite places of visitation. Water had always a special fascination for him and he used to say that the one thing which the view from Aldworth lacked was a great river winding through the plain.

Whether walking or driving, he always maintained that simplicity and unconventionality which made Irving describe him as the most completely natural person he had ever met. He would suddenly fall on his knees to bring his short-sighted eyes close to some stone or shell in the path or some plant in the turf or hedgerow, and William Allingham recorded once meeting him driving solemnly up the shady lane from Haslemere with his two-year-old grandson, and a distinguished American guest, little Alfred wearing the poet's immense wideawake and the poet with the child's straw hat decorated with blue riband on the top of his huge head.

Three places moulded the life of Tennyson. Somersby was the cradle of his genius. Farringford, the home of his early married life, where he found peace after twenty years of unhappiness and struggle. Aldworth, associated with the years of his fullest fame and with his death, for it was in the bedroom next to the library and looking over the Weald that he died in the small hours of the morning in 1892, with a volume of his beloved Shakespeare in his hand and the light of the full moon flooding the landscape outside and the room itself and his majestic figure as it lay like a statue of breathing marble on the bed.

" The final scene," said Mr. Tennyson, in conclusion, " was to be

at Westminster Abbey, where, to the sound of the mourning of a mighty nation, he was laid to rest in Poets' Corner, but I like rather to think of his passing from Aldworth; of the last words of the old clergyman from Lurgashall, as he stood with uplifted hand at his bedside: 'Lord Tennyson, God has taken you, Who made you a prince of men. Farewell'; and of the procession of villagers and school children which followed him over the moor on October 11th, while his old coachman, William Knight, a faithful servant of the family for over 60 years, led the old chestnut horse, Firefly, and the setting sun shone on the wreaths and crosses of flowers which had been sent by mourners from every corner of the United Kingdom."

The afternoon meeting, at which Mr. Charles Tennyson demonstrated the records of Tennyson's voice, was held in the room where the Poet Laureate worked for many years. This room, of course, was not large enough to hold all the guests, and the proceedings were broadcast to other parts of the house by means of a microphone and loudspeakers. The following message was read from the Trade Commissioner of Baroda: "Please convey to the Poetry Society and other guests assembled the cordial greetings of his Highness the Maharajah of Baroda, and express my sincere regret that I am unable to attend and convey his Highness's message in person."

Mr. Tennyson explained that the records of his grandfather's voice were made in 1889, when Thomas Edison sent over two men from America to take some phonographic records of famous Englishmen. Records were made by Tennyson, Gladstone and others, and the records to be played that afternoon were made by a man of eighty reciting into a small mouthpiece, a thing he had never been asked to do before. The sound was recorded on wax cylinders, which in those days could not be cast and used again. They had to use the original wax, and no doubt the records were used once or twice upon the old phonographic machine which Tennyson had lying about in his house. The wax cylinders remained in the poet's former house in the Isle of Wight until 1925, when the speaker found them there and was given permission to take them away. Mr. Tennyson explained the complicated process by which the voice was transferred from the wax cylinders to gramophone discs and said although there was a good deal of distortion the records did give the real sound of the poet's voice. They also gave his rhythm, an idea of his general method which was unexpected to many people, and of his dramatic power by variation of tempo and pitch.

In some of the records the early portions had perished, and these parts of the poems were recited by Mr. Tennyson, the records following on when the sound had become clear. The first record was "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava" (October 25th, 1854), of which the first three stanzas were heard. In these verses the voice was quite distinct, and also in the last three stanzas of "The

Charge of the Light Brigade," and passages from "Maud" and "Lancelot and Elaine." The gramophone was operated by Mr. Julian Tennyson.

Mr. Alfred Noyes, whose short address on Tennyson and readings from some of his poems were much appreciated, said they had been listening to one of the most moving experiences anyone who cared for English poetry could possibly have. That one line in the song from "Maud"—"Had I lain for a century dead"—ringing out as it did that day from that great poet, the greatest of the nineteenth century and one who would live in the history of England as long as Virgil had lived in the history of Rome and ringing out from a voice that had long passed away must have stirred everyone present very deeply indeed. It seemed to ring out from the room where he lived and worked with even greater intensity and feeling than on the previous occasion when he (Mr. Noyes) had the privilege of hearing it in private. It just seemed that that voice had come home.

A TRIBUTE BY MR. ALFRED NOYES

Mr. Noyes said he intended making only a few rambling remarks, but there were one or two things he very much wanted to say. One was a purely personal thing to himself, and it was that the works of Tennyson, ever since his boyhood days, had been to him a sort of Bible, a literary and poetic Bible. They had meant more to him in the way of mental and spiritual companionship than the works of any other author. Until quite recently it was difficult for them to say anything like that, but people were beginning to discover the futility of these literary fashions. At last it was becoming possible to admire one kind of work in its own sphere and to realize that that did not prevent them from admiring the work of another kind in other spheres. The best way of learning how to appreciate any new work was to have a thorough realization of the value of work done in the past. It did not seem to him that anyone could possibly appreciate the best work being done to-day unless they knew what was achieved by the great artists of the past, and whatever view anyone might take of Tennyson's rank as a great poet he was certainly one of the greatest artists, perhaps one of the half-dozen greatest artists that had lived in any language. No-one could handle words with more skill and precision than Tennyson did, and he proved more clearly, perhaps, than any other poet that clarity was not incompatible with magic. In fact, logical precision and clarity, if they were rightly used, led them to the greatest magic of all.

When, for instance, they got the clarity of a poet like Wordsworth, who was closely akin to Tennyson in many ways, the clarity of his picture of the shadow of a flower thrown on a stone—there they had a little picture pencilled in with the utmost accuracy and precision and yet the poetical magic of the picture was intensified by his very clarity and precision because he was bringing them almost to the point of

view of the Creator of that flower. After all, a blurred picture might mean anything, but if they got a precisely true picture of any object in nature they were getting very near to the reality in which that particular object had its roots. That did not mean that they were being photographic. The present day was rather apt to suppose that to be an artist you must somehow distort nature in order to avoid the photographic. In fact, he had heard a modern artist say that all art was distortion. One knew what he was driving at. One knew that he was trying to get away from the idea that art must simply reproduce what one saw in the world around. But the older method which used what it saw in the world around in order to shadow forth something greater, something more perfect, was surely the true method. To distort was to confess one's failure, but to use, not perhaps the exact thing which they saw in nature, but what the Creator was aiming at in making that thing, enabled the true artists to shadow forth the perfection which was not of this world, but belonged really to the regions of religion in which all great art culminated.

Some people scoffed to-day at the perfection of the Greeks, but surely there was something profoundly philosophical about that method which took the beauty of the world around to shadow forth perfect beauty. The artists who were doing that at least had a philosophy behind them. The people who adopted the opposite method, no matter how good their motives might be, or how much they might seem to justify themselves by saying "we don't want to be photographic," those people were surely taking the wrong road. At the present time they saw around them a deliberate seeking after ugliness for a good purpose and in art and literature they were rapidly approaching the stage when unless they were very careful, as a distinguished living French philosopher had remarked, a sinister figure would appear among them and in an accusing voice exclaim, "You are, everyone of you, possessed."

At the conclusion of his address Mr. Noyes read three of the shorter poems by the master artist whose voice they had been privileged to listen to that afternoon, three poems, he remarked, which dealt specifically with that house and neighbourhood. The first were the verses to General Hamley, forming the prologue to "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava," in which occurred the well known lines describing the scene from the terrace at Aldworth :

> "You come and look'd and loved the view
> Long known and loved by me,
> Green Sussex fading into blue
> With one gray glimpse of sea."

The second poem read by Mr. Noyes was "The Roses on the Terrace," and the third was "June Bracken and Heather," in which in a poem dedicated to his wife the poet speaks of the "wild heather

round me and over me" on the top of the down near his home at Aldworth. This was a poem of extreme simplicity of which some of their moderns might very well take note instead of searching for outlandish words. Nobody suggested returning to the past, remarked Mr. Noyes in conclusion, but it had been advocated by every man who knew what good writing was all through the ages that the best way to learn how to write well was to learn from the masters of the past and even to imitate them at one stage. Samuel Johnson rubbed that in again and again. He said, "Give your days and nights to the study of Addison," and English literature at the present time could do a great deal worse than give its days and nights to the study of that master of exquisite precision and clarity, who had the gift of saying what he meant with the utmost truth and yet at the same time conveying the magic of the world around him—Tennyson.

Commander Francis Cadogan read Sir William Watson's elegy on Tennyson, "Lachrimae Musarum"—which the late Sir William Watson read himself on the occasion of the Poetry Society's last visit to Aldworth in 1924—and a hearty vote of thanks was passed to Mr. B. W. Horne, agent for the Maharajah of Baroda, for the excellent arrangements he had made for the pilgrimage. Mr. Tennyson said he had spared no trouble to make the day a success and the arrangements had been perfect in every way. The country owed him a deep debt of gratitude for the part he had taken in preserving that place.

Mr. Alfred Noyes proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the Maharajah of Baroda for his great kindness in allowing the Poetry Society to come to Baroda and thus enabling them to spend such a memorable day.

The motion was carried by acclamation.

Mr. B. W. Horne, in reply, said ever since the late Maharajah Gaekwar of Baroda purchased the property in 1921 it had been his (the speaker's) great privilege to manage it for him. His Highness came there but seldom, but the remarkable thing was his increasing love for the house and its surroundings. But for his infirmity and his interests in other directions he would have come there much more often. Of course, he interested himself in numerous matters, but sometimes he came there for rest and quiet and he always said to him, "what a wonderful place this is." Mr. Horne said he believed the Maharajah felt the influence of the place and he appreciated as much as anybody the wonderful view from the terrace. Many people came there with plans for making the place more suitable for a reigning prince, involving the sweeping away of the fireplaces, which were so interesting, and various other features, but when the Maharajah heard that they were put there by Tennyson his invariable reply was that they must remain. It was satisfactory that so little change had taken place. Unfortunately, a few things had been taken away which he (the speaker) deplored and had no means of preventing, but whatever had been done in that respect had been more than compensated for

by the money which the Maharajah had spent on the place. The house was now in excellent structural order and the gardens were beautifully maintained. It was now an extremely pleasant place to live in and much more comfortable than when Lord Tennyson died. He only hoped that Aldworth still had sufficient appeal that it would find a suitable owner. It was a great anxiety to him lest after all these years it should get into hands which were not sympathetic and did not appreciate the Tennyson tradition. He was afraid the time would come when the present Maharajah would feel that he must dispose of the property and he only hoped that it would have a sympathetic owner or owners.

Mrs. Kenneth Graham, who as a girl knew Tennyson quite well, gave some personal recollections of him and spoke of his strong but simple character. It was in Switzerland that she first knew Tennyson and sometimes he would take her on his knee and recite the very lines which, as they had heard that afternoon, had been preserved for them. She remembered all the words simply from having heard them so often. The records had brought back her memories of Tennyson, his gestures and the flashing of his eyes as he declaimed " The Charge of the Light Brigade." It was a great happiness to know that the upper part of Tennyson's Lane had been preserved by the purchase of land on either side of it, now being held by the National Trust, and she was wondering whether Aldworth itself could not be added to that and made into a national museum. Lesser men than Tennyson had had monuments provided to their memory. Quite apart from the place which he occupied as one of their greatest poets he was a very kind man, one of the greatest and simplest, and one of the noblest men who ever lived.

Lieut.-Colonel W. P. Hume, hon. secretary and treasurer of the Haslemere and District Preservation Society, gave an account of the successful effort made to preserve for all time the upper part of Tennyson's Lane purchased through the kindness of some generous people in the neighbourhood and other gifts had been of fifty-eight acres of woods on Marley and of Shottermill Ponds. The Tennyson's Lane scheme cost £6,000 and visitors would have noticed the contrast between the well kept road between the land now held by the National Trust and the abominable road fronting the houses further along. Their object had been not only to preserve the present attractive character of Tennyson's Lane, but also to discourage charabancs from going over it to ruin Blackdown. They did not want to become like Hindhead, where, someone had said, that there was a motor car behind every bush. Blackdown, said Colonel Hume, was an unspoilt place and they wanted it to remain such. Their hope was that Aldworth would also remain unspoilt, if that were possible.

Mr. E. H. Blakeney, of Winchester, thanked Mr. Charles Tennyson for the part he had taken in making the gathering such a successful one, particularly by the information he had given them of his illustrious grandfather's life at Aldworth, and also expressed his appreciation

of the address given by Mr. Alfred Noyes. The room in which they were standing was the room in which Tennyson did much of his work and was hallowed ground made dear to them by the memory of one upon whose like they would not look again. Readings of two of Tennyson's dialect poems were given by Mr. Charles Tennyson and Mrs. Fenwick Owen, niece of Mr. W. F. Rawnsley who had guided the pilgrims and at the close of the meeting tea was served.

MARIA J. SMIETON (Kew Gardens) comments on A TRIUMPH OF THE PHONOGRAPH :

In 1886 I sat in a drab upper room in the Town Hall of a small Somerset market town to hear the story of a new invention—the phonograph. I was a boarder in a school where " plain living and high thinking " were the order of the day, and we were taken to the Town Hall that evening as a special treat.

Entranced by the wonder of it all, we heard of the cylinder of wax over which a needle moved, making sound waves on it from the human voice. The voice spoke and moved the air ; the air set the needle in motion ; the needle cut its way into the moving roll.

Reversing the process the needle moved again, this time over its own path ; as it moved it set again in motion the surrounding air, in vibrations exactly similar to those it had received ; these air vibrations emitted the sounds of the original voice !

A new world opened to the boarding school children sitting on the benches. It was hoped, we were told, that in this way some great voices, Queen Victoria's for instance, might be preserved, and kept in museums !

That was yesterday ! To-day, on this summer Saturday in 1939, as a member of the Poetry Society I heard that hope fulfilled. In the Gothic house of soft grey stone, built by Tennyson on the edge of the Sussex wold, the voice of the poet, recorded on wax in 1889 (three years after the lecture), was reproduced for our benefit in his own old study. This was its first hearing at a gathering outside the family circle.

Tennyson's old study has wide views over the Sussex spaces. It looks directly on to a terrace, where cypresses of his own planting have grown tall against a background of far distances. This view takes in some fifty miles of countryside. Over all the house were the softest of soft carpets, of the colour of cedar-wood, or of powder blue ; at the windows were hangings of clear colours, and massed flowers filled the fireplaces. As I listened in these surroundings, my thoughts flew back to the meagre upper room, where I had first heard the story of the phonograph, and rested with a satisfied pleasure on the prophetic lecture given there so long ago. A great voice of the time had indeed been caught and held, and to-day we were hearing it as from the grave.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP :

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S AWARDS

A poem by I. SUTHERLAND GROOM is outstanding, and we hope to have the privilege of publishing it, but we must again place this distinguished contributor " honoris causis " and divide the premium between four meritorious competitors who do not so uniformly and certainly get into the premium class—JOAN IMIG, Highland Park, Illinois ; ENID W. BARRY (lately known to us as Enid Mark), Highgate, N. ; EDITH H. RAY, Cardiff ; and EDITH M. WALKER, Bournemouth.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Elizabeth F. Alden, Haddenham ;
Rachel Boulton, Winscombe ;
Dennis Birch, Lichfield ;
T. E. Casson, Ulverston ;
Marguerite Edgelow, Gerrard's Cross ;
Jessie B. Heard, Bristol ;
J. W. G. Heaven, Ealing ;
Christine L. Henderson, Montreal ;
Redcliffe McKie, Hove ;
B. F. Pargiter, London, S.W. ;
Sybil Powis, Goodmayes ;
Derek B. Reade, Tettenhall ;
Brenda F. Skene, London, W. ;
Margery Smith, Nottingham ;
C. Woodhouse, Haslemere ;

COMMENDED

Elizabeth Barrett, Seaford ;
D. R. W. Carr, Ferryhill ;
Enid I. Carter, Hassocks ;
Evelyn Couchman, Menton ;
N. K. Cruickshank, Sudbury ;
P. Eugenie Emerie, East Sheen ;
Con. Harvey, Goodmayes ;
Eleanor M. Hough, Bombay ;
Pauline Huthwaite, Hawksworth ;
C. E. H. Jacobs, Singapore ;
Irene H. Lewis, Leatherhead ;
A.F.M., Wexford ;
Ierne Ormsby, Thurgoland ;
E. Curt Peters, Chalfont St. Giles ;
Frances Paul, London, S.W. ;
T. Pittaway, Frome ;
Violet Rawnsley, Anacapri ;
Hilda M. Slade, Worthing ;
Arthur Lynnford Smith, Wanstead ;
D. E. C. Tomlin, Diss ;
J. A. Tysall, Cleethorpes ;
Phyllis Dulce Warwick, Newark.

Amongst those " Highly Commended " especial reference must be made to the contributions of *Sybil Powis* and *C. Woodhouse*.

The usual premium offer is continued—see page 341 ; closing date, October 1st.

We are notified that *Don Franke's Gag-and-Joke Book*, which is issued regularly from 3623 W. Dickens Avenue, Chicago, and sells at thirteen cents, postpaid, is in the market for short humorous verse—no restriction other than the material must be original, clever, and slanted specifically to the needs of the publication. "Payment is on acceptance, one cent a word minimum, more for exceptionally meritorious material. As our book circulates among radio and theatrical people, also on Broadway and in Hollywood, there is ample publicity for any writer making his appearance in this periodical."

"THE TRUE SUN": THE RELATION OF POETRY TO LIFE

IT is a relief in this present year of disgrace to find a book emerging from the press quite untainted by contemporary international problems, concerned first and last with permanent instead of transitory values.[1] One of the worst elements of the present situation is the slow but sure inoculation of almost all writers by the political serum.

A recent leading article in *The Times Literary Supplement*, based on another new book, *A Dialogue on Modern Poetry*, by Ruth Bailey, suggests that we are "caught in the death-throes of a civilization," that "human consciousness is passing through a major crisis." Perhaps the reality of the crisis need not be questioned, but there are still people who believe that our present discomfort may be due not to death-throes but to birth-pangs. Since there is an inevitable association between the two, the confusion of thought is understandable.

Always there have been life-poets and death-poets, the difference of direction being in essence psychological. A writer of intense vitality, who tends always towards life and life-suggestions, will not, even when surrounded by death-influences, change his direction, and will, indeed must, build even out of darkness and tragedy and a seeming death, new daylight assurances, a deep acceptance, and the splendour of resurrection.

It is suggested by one of the disputants in Miss Bailey's book that

> The poet writes what he can, what his own nature and the nature of the times make it necessary that he should write. And at present it is necessary that he should make statements on unpleasant subjects (p. 60).

That he should write as his nature dictates is very true, and goes, rather too keenly to be altogether pleasant perhaps, to the root of the whole trouble about poetry. The nature of the poet, and his spiritual stature, determines whether he writes great poetry, or indeed *poetry* at all. Which explains

[1] *The Burning Oracle*. Studies in the Poetry of Action. By G. Wilson Knight. (Oxford University Press, 12s. 6d.)

why " a poet like Eliot can make himself felt through thick mufflings of obscurity " (p. 74), why *Gerontion* is a powerful poem, while certain other poems referred to are not. And with a great poet, the nature of the times will not determine the *quality* of his writing, though it may influence the content. And it is on quality that poetry depends.

The relation of politics to literature is, especially at the moment, a subject of interest, though not of first importance. The poet, who is concerned always, whether consciously or not, with the creating of a better social order and the perfectibility of man, reacts instantly and acutely to new social conditions, and, quite naturally, the intensity of the reaction stirs him to combat. But unfortunately his poetry then becomes didactic. Very few poets, it is true, even the greatest, have avoided this danger, but it is noteworthy that the political works are not the ones that live. Shelley is not remembered for *The Mask of Anarchy*, nor Wordsworth for his rather pompous writings on the French Revolution, neither is Milton often thought of as the author of the *Areopagitica*. But *Prometheus Unbound*, the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* and *Paradise Lost* survive the centuries and live an immortal life from generation to generation. Therefore poets, and writers on poetry, are wisest when they traffic in the eternal.

Throughout Professor Knight's new book the vital sense of the eternal prevails. There is, for example, in the essay on *The Shakespearian Integrity* a continual stress on the inter-relationship of man and the universe, with the inevitable corollary that man is in fact greater than he himself knows. But Shakespeare knew, and in his work " the dignity of human personality is central throughout " (p. 42). If man knew his own selfhood, he would become conscious of his ultimate high destiny. It is as if Shakespeare, like God, sees always the inherent dignity, too often unseen by the individual himself. This is a profoundly Christian concept: no other religion so emphasizes the value of individuality. Also, the knowledge of one's own selfhood is the end towards which all modern psychology works.

The Burning Oracle is probably the most profound of a series of books of extraordinary penetration and prophetic power. The " sense of some new *dimension* beyond direct knowledge " (p. 165) is the centre of them all. There is no doubt that in this new dimension lies the solution to all our ills, though the word " new " in this context must be used with care, since it is evident that the dimension lies at the very core of human existence, and always has done. Its discovery would be a rediscovery. Possibly the concept of the Fall gives the clue to its loss. It is clear that we must give the closest attention to the poets with an inherent sense of these truths. Pope had it, Mr. Knight feels, also Byron, who is " deeply, because essentially, Christian," and " whose great importance rises from his battling honesty, the powerful sexual thrust of his imagination, conjoined to keenest intellectual awareness of all the issues involved " (p. 220). Shakespeare, naturally, is the giant among them all. Milton must be included, though it is suggested that certain human problems, notably his attitude to sex, and consequently to women, hindered the clearest sight :

> Milton writes of angels, Christ, and God from a consciousness saturated in the knowledge of sin ; whereas Shakespeare—or Milton in his own creation of Satan—sanctifies sin by writing of it from a god-like understanding (p. 82).

Presumably it was this knowledge of sin that made the character of Satan more powerful, living and credible than the other characters in *Paradise Lost*. The final answer to the torturing erotic problems stressed in the essay on Milton lies in a phrase from one of Wilson Knight's earlier books, *Atlantic Crossing* : " All forms of physical and sex nausea derive from an essentially irreligious consciousness." The sacramental view of life, alone, accepts, redeems, and so more than pardons, sin ; the evil is so washed and purged that finally only a precipitate remains which is seen as nothing more than pitiful human frailty. This is the heart of Christian love, and may be compared with a passage on pp. 223–225 of *Atlantic Crossing*, a book entirely different in form from the rest of Mr. Knight's work, verging on the novel-form, and deliberately, I imagine, so cast in order to

house the central experience more accessibly. It demands close study: an unusual book in which the "love-story" an obviously necessary element in any attempt to present a picture of life as a whole, and especially in this book, is in essence symbolical, while the philosophic and religious musings go to the roots of human existence. So does the analysis of Swift's work in the essay *Swift and the Symbolism of Irony* in the present book. The inclusion of this essay in a book concerned with poets of positive aim and direction is interesting, since it can be argued therefrom that no element can remain, to a final analysis, negative. The satirists, no less than idealists, aim to create a better condition. Which leads to the conclusion that finally life itself will ensure that progress goes on, and there is, as Shakespeare sees, "good in everything." This inclusive philosophy is the deepest of all, and is inherent in the work of one of the greatest of Christian poets, Browning, who could never see failure as anything but an opportunity for progress, and insisted that every seeming stumbling-block is to a clearer view a stepping-stone. In the essay on Shakespeare Mr. Knight makes clear how in "spiritual conflict . . . the wound contributes to its own closure," the wound being itself creative, which recalls the truth stressed frequently in the book that really contains the body of his doctrine, *The Christian Renaissance*, "to a final understanding experience of disharmony is itself creative." The artist, the individual, not conscious of this tends inevitably to disintegrate. D. H. Lawrence is a tragic example. These concepts go deep into metaphysical and philosophical problems: the nature of good and evil and its ultimate meaning and purpose. Seeing life steadily, and seeing it whole seems to ensure a realization of a universe ultimately *good* ("This world's no blot for us nor blank, It means intensely and means good [1]"), which belief is indeed integral to a vital Christian faith. It must be rigidly distinguished from a facile optimism. I should say that it is precisely the lack of this faith that lies at the root of our contemporary ills, both in life and in literature.

[1] Browning, *Fra Lippo Lippo.*

The close and penetrating analysis in Mr. Knight's essays of the poetry itself is a delight, and especially to the reader who desires to go to the heart of a poet's work and cannot always do this unaided. Mr. Knight reveals significances hitherto undreamed of. And it is a pleasure to find a critic of such wide and deep learning valuing the *delicacy* of so much of Milton's imagery. Too many critics concentrate on the weighty Milton they find in *Paradise Lost* and forget, or have never observed, the airy poet who wrote such lines as "entice the dewy-feather'd sleep." And Mr. Knight refers to the famous "pealing organ" passage in "*Il Penseroso* as "the very heart of Milton."

There is an important analysis of Byron as poet and man in the essay *The Two Eternities*. Byron, says Mr. Knight,

> *lives* that eternity which is art. He is more than a writer: his virtues and vices are precisely those entwined at the roots of poetry. He is poetry incarnate (p. 198).

He makes clear how both Pope and Byron, finally, are working to the same end: Pope's aim is "to set the *passions* on the side of truth," Byron "aims to swing over certain powerful instincts from a destructive to a creative direction."

In the long essay on Pope, *The Vital Flame*, close attention is given to the poem *Eloisa to Abelard*, "certainly Pope's greatest human poem and probably the greatest short love-poem in our language." The greatness of the poem lies no doubt in its profound erotic-religious implications, which Eloisa sees as a tragic conflict, expressed poignantly in the single line:

> The image steals between my God and me.

This conflict, at the very heart of the deepest love, appears inevitable until the moment when it is finally resolved, when, as with all psychological conflict, it is seen to be based on a misconception, since human love, properly understood, is the one certain way to the divine, and love for a human being, rather than being in opposition to, is in itself a form of love for, God. But Eloisa's thought is confused:

> Eloisa accuses religion of killing those "best of passions," love and

fame; the erotic and power instincts, ideals of emotion and action (p. 150).

Actually the reverse is true: true Christianity vitalizes both; a religion which kills is not Christianity. Yet Eloisa's understanding of the spiritual nature of her love is revealed in her insistence on freedom:

Married love she is proud of having refused, despising any such compact: "Curse on all laws but those which love has made." . . . She aspires to absolute unmoral freedom in love's bondage (p. 150).

Freedom is of the very essence of absolute love. But the issues go fathoms deep, and are not resolved by a simple acceptance or rejection of marriage. The *true* freedom is a final and complete *inner* emancipation, which may or may not, according to circumstances, be reflected in outward action. Love cannot be bound, for this reduces an eternal concept to temporal terms, but in the deepest love the problem would scarcely arise, being instinctively understood; it is possible to conceive of freedom even within the marriage-bond, the freedom depending wholly on the *quality* of the love. The familiar words of the Prayer Book, "Whose service is perfect freedom" provide an analogy.

In the analysis of this poem there is a reference to sleep which raises interesting and obscure questions:

Desire she may conquer by day; but in sleep, when "nature" is free (and what power lies in this easy expression of a simple yet terrifying thought) it rises newly strong and unconquerable. For then "all my loose soul unbounded springs to thee" (p. 151).

This recalls the closing lines of Alice Meynell's loveliest sonnet, *Renouncement*:

> But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
> When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
> And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,
> Must doff my will as raiment laid away,—
> With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
> I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

There seems irrefutable evidence that during sleep the subliminal self is freed, and achieves immediate knowledge in a way that is impossible while the conscious self is in

control. In other words, then, and then only—except in rare waking moments usually termed visionary—is the self in direct contact with reality. Here, again, the extra dimension is involved. Another aspect of the thought is expressed in Christopher Hassall's *Penthesperon*:

> . . . Men have affirmed
> That souls migrate like swallows in their sleep
> To the warm land where they would be, and hold
> Brief hours of truant parley with their loves.

The "terrifying" aspect lies in the fact that influences, powers and information may come which are not only not necessarily good, but may be positively dangerous. Which might be one of the explanations of insomnia: the self, in certain circumstances, unconsciously driven to war against the perilous freedom of sleep. But these speculations overweight a brief article.

The comments on Pope's *Essay on Criticism* are delightful:

> Let those censure, we are told, who can write themselves; "false learning" has damaged good sense; much poor criticism derives from inferiority and jealousy. . . . Critics often, being creative failures themselves, seize on rules easy to understand, pronounce judgment on their betters, and "write dull receipts how poems should be made" (p. 156).

Which is all painfully true of criticism to-day. Ideally, there should be one valid reason only for critical writing: a conviction in the critic, based on irrefutable intuition, that he has a certain immediate understanding of the writer's central experience and general direction. This kind of criticism is essentially creative, deriving from the imaginative depths. It goes without saying that it is concerned not with the technique (though that must sometimes be touched on) but with the content of a work of art.

> The art-form must be understood in the *spirit*[1] of its composition and seen, or felt, as a *whole* (p. 157).

This might be called, rather than criticism, imaginative interpretation. It is found in all Professor Knight's writings.

[1] The italics are mine.

Happily, there are everywhere, in spite of the contemporary chaos, indications that the long post-war period of disillusion, with its influence on literature of dryness, excessive intellectualism and obscurity, is at an end, although in Miss Bailey's book the poets reflecting that period are largely discussed. But the true poets are coming, indeed have come, into their own. It is necessary only to mention the recognition of Miss Ruth Pitter, Mr. Laurence Whistler, and, this year, Mr. Christopher Hassall, all poets in whom the romantic centre of poetry, the vital sense of life, dominates. There is no fear that in their work the " true sun " will ever be obscured by shadows. Which does *not* mean that they are not realists. The writers who allow themselves to be overwhelmed by the evil forces, the death-influences, are themselves contributing to those evils. That is why the infection of literature by politics is, to a final understanding, undesirable. It is possible of course for a great writer to see in present conditions certain indications of vital and enduring significance ; he is then justified in writing of those conditions, but in the main the poet fails in his mission when he becomes possessed by ideologies that must of their very nature prove impermanent. The problem is complex, since we agree that all parts of life contribute to the whole, but all parts are not equally valuable, and this seems to be the root-fallacy in one of the " defence " arguments in Miss Bailey's book :

> The new poets have recovered unification of sensibility ; they can devour any kind of experience (p. 95).

No poem, no picture, no symphony can, or should attempt to, include the whole body of the artist's experience. All is *not* equally valuable. Art (and also the art of living) lies in extracting the essentials (and excluding the inessentials) and creating from the essentials the perfect whole. And this is *difficult* ; every honest artist knows the difficulty of the problem of exclusion. The other way, " to devour any kind of experience " and include it, is comparatively easy. It makes not for power but for weakness, and art

inevitably grows confused, diffused, uncontrolled and therefore obscure.

In a mad world it becomes increasingly important for the artist, for every leader of thought, to maintain his sanity. Perhaps if everyone were to turn deliberately from politics and international problems, and devote themselves instead to the eternal values, the true significances of human life, a miracle would happen, the great miracle of peace on earth.

DALLAS KENMARE.

DECEMBER WOODS

HE who lived is gone;
The slow tears fall.
Youth and age and death
And that is all.

Trunks rise in black above the snow,
Bare branches creak beneath the sky.
Cold, hard, intense, above, below,
And rending winds that pierce and cry,

Dry memories of stalks that were
And leaves that haunt the parent tree,
Leaves sparse and brown,—an empty bur;
These things, the last reality.

The storm moves on and in the place
Made clean by wind, tracks break the snow;
Wings lightly cut the frozen space
And in the oak, the sap runs low.

He who lived is gone;
The slow tears fall.
Youth and age and death
Perhaps are all.

HELEN PEAVY WASHBURN.

UNCONQUERED

WHY should we bow to terror in this age?
Are we not men whose forefathers survived
The Age of Ice, when our foe Death contrived
To hold Life prisoner in a crystal cage?
Did they not tame old fire despite his rage
And make him servant while they lived and wived?
Ours is the breed that had Euphrates gyved,
And made proud Nile a gardener without wage.
Black plagues and famines rode with hosts of woe.
They battled. We stood fast! 'Twas we who won.
Worse winters have there been and deeper snow,
And may be still before our tale is spun.
Stay by your guns. The Caesars come, then go
Out on Time's dust-cart when the night is done.

WALTER BURTON.

THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER

I SHALL remember
Every year, the fifth of November,
For on this day was shown to me
What angels would desire to see.
I shall remember the worn way
On which I walked, and the dull day;
How leaning on a gate I gazed
At a high hill, where cattle grazed.
I shall remember
That seven-fold coloured rainbow band
Changing a hill to faery land.
A rainbow round a hill became
A picture in a perfect frame.
Though I know my search will be vain,
Watch, I will, for that sight again;
But when the years are at November
I shall remember.

C. MORTON.

SUCKLING RECONSIDERED

AS there is neither an accurate edition[1] of Suckling nor any good comprehensive critique[2] upon his writings, it is perhaps time that some attempt were made to remedy the deficiency. Even if the task is rather thankless, there must always be someone to

> " Edit and annotate the lines
> That young men, tossing on their beds,
> Rhymed out in love's despair
> To flatter beauty's ignorant ear."

In the following essay I have tried to indicate Suckling's range and limitations, how he was influenced and what influence he himself exerted.

That Suckling has been taken as the typical Cavalier lyrist is perhaps fortunate. His songs, more than those of any other single writer, are representative of every side of Carolean court life, from the refinement and nobility of the first Charles himself to the reckless bawdiness, licentiousness and profanity that had first become rife under James. Nor is this surprising when we remember that the friend of the " ever-memorable " divine John Hales and the saintly Lord Falkland was at the same time a notorious gamester, spendthrift and libertine who more than once experienced public ignominy. Suckling is pre-eminently a courtier,[3] a intense Royalist,[4] a versatile gentleman (as many still were, even so late in the Renaissance): soldier, linguist, musician, M.P., inventor of cribbage, famous in tavern and on the bowling-green, poet, wit, pamphleteer, playwright-producer—the colourful and ostentatious young knight around whose actions and mysterious death strange legends grew up and were disseminated. Aubrey's sketch of his visit to Bath with Davenant in 1637 is characteristic: " Sir John Suckling came like a young

[1] All editions aiming at completeness include several poems which are not Suckling's: Owen Fellltham's " When, dearest, I but think on thee," for example. W. C. Hazlitt's, in two volumes, second edition, 1892, is still the best.

[2] F. W. Moorman's three-page assessment in the *Camb. Hist. of Eng. Lit.* (Vol. VII, ch. I), is the best thing of its kind.

[3] He actually went to Court before he was twenty (1628) but was there only intermittently.

[4] It was his foolhardy though perfectly honourable part in the First Army Plot, which tried to get command of the army for the King, that led to his conviction for treason.

prince for all manner of equipage and convenience, and had a cartload of books carried down."[1] But when it came to the choice it was not literature that came first : he admits that " He loved not the muses as well as his sport ";[2] he appears to have expended more time and attention on the production than on the writing of his plays ; while we are told " he would frequently lie in bed the greater part of the day with a pack of cards before him."[3]

It is generally agreed that his lines " savour more of the grape than of the lamp."[4] From this essential warm-bloodedness arise both the charm and the faults of his poetry, its spontaneity and its carelessness. In condemning Carew for the " trouble and pain " he expended on composition, he insists that " A laureate muse should be easy and free." It was still an age of unprofessional and unpretentious poets whose lyrics were handed round in manuscript rather than printed. The widespread delight in and demand for song-lyric can hardly be overstressed. It is the songs of Suckling, some of which occur in his plays, that have brought him most of his fame ; they were extremely popular throughout the seventeenth century, exerted much influence, and some were set to music by Henry Lawes.[5]

And it is in the songs that the influence of Donne is clearest, especially in openings such as " O for some honest lover's ghost"[6] and "I prithee send me back my heart"[7]. From Donne he learnt the habit of beginning abruptly : "Out upon it, I have loved",[8] "Never believe me if I love," (but in nearly every instance the ensuing lines are entirely in his own manner) ; and from Donne he caught the general metaphysical style, especially the characteristic of argumentative persuasiveness. He differs from Donne in his avoid-

[1] *Brief Lives.*
[2] *A Sessions of the Poets.*
[3] Davenant, via Aubrey.
[4] W. Winstanley's *Lives of the Most Famous English Poets*, 1687.
[5] Those that appeared most frequently were the so-called Sonnets and " Out upon it, I have loved."
[6] cf. " I long to talk with some old lovers' ghost."
[7] cf. " Send back those long-strained eyes to me."
[8] cf. Donne's " Now thou hast loved me one whole day " and Cowley's " I've loved at least some twenty years or more."

ance of intense feeling, in his greater ease, lucidity and (often) smoothness; in his limited range of learning and imagination; and in having both the full Cavalier gaiety and a bravura of his own.

Suckling's conceits, unlike those of Donne, whom he acknowledges as the "great lord" of wit,[1] are very rarely astonishing or *recherché*. He used chiefly familiar concrete images, and prefers elaborating a single image rather than juxtaposing a variety of unrelated ones. A masterly example is

> "'Tis now since I sat down before
> That foolish fort a heart,"

a poem justly famous in its own century, though I suppose the sentiment[2] expressed towards the end has prevented its becoming so in ours. The poem may have been suggested by an earlier piece beginning:

> "When Cupide scaled first the fort
> Wherein my heart lay wounded sore,
> The batry was of such a sort
> That I must yelde or die therefore."[3]

To what lengths a similar idea could be carried by more extreme metaphysicals can be seen from Cleveland's *Antiplatonic*:

> "Love storms his lips and takes the fortress in
> For all the bristled turnpikes of his chin."

The clock image (a favourite of his)[4] is also developed throughout a single poem, of which this is the first stanza;

> "That none beguilèd be by time's quick flowing,
> Lovers have in their hearts a clock still going,
> For though time be nimble, his motions
> Are quicker
> And thicker
> Where love hath his notions."

[1] *To my Friend Will Davenant, on his Other Poems.*
[2] The same as that of Carew's *Rapture*, a very fine poem.
[3] Lord Vaux (1510–56.) As quoted in Percy's *Reliques*.
[4] Cf. ll. 11 and 12 of *To his Rival* and

> "Life like a dial's hand hath stolen
> From the fair figure ere it was perceived."
> *Brennoralt.*

Though far less perfect than Vaughan's *Waterfall*, is has a similar fusion of sound and sense.

Suckling, though generally content to compare brows to lilies and cheeks to Catherine pears, will occasionally come out with such a simile as :

> " Her feet beneath her petticoat
> Like little mice stole in and out,"[1]

and say of one mortally wounded : " His soul will sail out with this purple tide."[2]

The fact that on a few occasions he stooped to gross obscenities seems to show that it was rather lack of cleverness than good taste that saved him from perpetrating numerous Clevelandisms, and made him content to write rather ponderously of Love's Burning-Glass and produce such comparatively unremarkable and hackneyed conceits as :

> " If thou be'st ice I do admire
> How thou couldst set my heart on fire."

Although Suckling is generally numbered among the " sons of Ben ", I have failed to trace much marked influence of Jonson, either general or particular, on his style. There is, to be sure, the little song *To Celia* recently rescued from oblivion by Norman Ault ;[3] and in the Wedding Ballad a dash of Jonson is certainly detectable (it is really nearer Herrick, his chief pupil). But perhaps the influence would be apparent in the masques he wrote and produced, were they preserved.[4] There are, to be sure, interesting references to Jonson in his writings :—he is the chief figure satirized in *A Sessions of the Poets*, and is the Signor Multicarni, the Poet, of an irrelevant little scene in *The Sad One* ; while the Song to a Lute in that play is a travesty of the third stanza of " See the chariot at hand here of Love " in *The Devil is an Ass*.[5] Perhaps Suckling owes something to Jonson for some of his very various stanza forms ; but, judging from his attitude towards composition, as expressed

[1] *Ballad of a Wedding.*
[2] *Aglaura.*
[3] *A Treasury of Unfamiliar Lyrics*, 1938, p. 179.
[4] From *A Prologue of the Author's to a Masque at Witten* we know he must have written at least one.
[5] 1631, (acted 1616).

in the *Sessions*, it would seem unnecessary to look for much resemblance between the writings of two such different workers.

Less attractive to him was :

> " The sweat of Jonson's learned brain
> (Than) gentle Shakespeare's easier strain,"[1]

and Suckling, like Charles I, was a great Shakespearean enthusiast. Born in the year of the Sonnets and *Troilus*, he lived to be an imitator ; he praised and quoted him in conversation and in his writings ; and the best of the three portraits of him by Van Dyck represents him with the First Folio in his hand.[2] Apart from a single slight exception,[3] the influence is confined to the plays, being especially marked in *The Goblins*, which Sheridan thought of rewriting.

The badness of Suckling's four plays[4] can be considered either as the outcome of his own carelessness and incompetence or as a sign of the times. It would indeed be hard to find better examples of the prevailing tendency towards mechanical composition ; of rhetorical superficiality ; and of the degeneration of dramatic blank verse—for he could (I use his own words) " trim up a little prose and spoil it handsomely " better than almost any poet of repute.

It is not surprising to find that plays for the most part so repulsive artistically have been ill-edited from the first. But even in a short study they cannot be overlooked : they reveal a different side of the writer, and an old saying in regard to one of them, that it had " fine flowers, but they seemed rather stuck than growing there "[5] can be applied to them all. The most notable flowers are the songs : " Why so pale and wan, fond lover ? " " No, no, fair heretic, it needs must be " in *Aglaura*, and admirable drinking songs in *The Goblins* and *Brennoralt*, such as " A health to the nut-brown lass " (said to have suggested

[1] *An Epistle to John Hales*. (ll. 21 and 22.)
[2] The portrait is at Hartwell, near Aylesbury.
[3] *A Supplement of an Imperfect Copy of Verses* (some stanzas from *The Rape of Lucrece*, ll. 386 et seq., altered and added to).
[4] Of which *The Sad One* is incomplete and was never acted.
[5] Quoted by R. Flecknoe in his *Short Discourse of the English Stage*, 1164.

" Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen " in *The School for Scandal*) and " She's pretty to walk with ". But there are several speeches which deserve to be rescued from obscurity. The following rather Virgilian example is worthy of a place among Lamb's *Specimens* :

" There was a time
When snakes and adders had no being,
When the poor infant-world had no worse reptiles
Than were the melon and the strawberry !
Those were the golden times of innocence.
There were no kings then, nor no lustful peers,
No smooth-faced favourites, nor no cuckolds, sure.
O, how happy is that man whose humbler thoughts
Kept him from Court ; who never yet was taught
The glorious way unto damnation !
Who never did aspire
Further than the cool shades of quiet rest.
How have the heavens his lower wishes blest.
Sleep makes his labours sweet, and innocence
Does his mean fortunes truly recompense;
He feels no hot loves, nor no palsy fears,
No fits of filthy lusts, or of pale jealousies.
He wants, it's true, our clothes, our masks, our diet,
And wants our cares, our fears and our disquiets."[1]

And so is this :

" For in those groves thou talkest of
There are so many byways and odd turnings,
Leading unto such wide and dismal places
That should we go without a guide or stir
Before heaven calls, 'tis strongly to be feared
We there should wander up and down for ever
And be benighted to eternity."[2]

Many of the best, unfortunately, are too full of Shakespearean echoes to stand in isolation.

To find an abundance of undigested borrowings in plays otherwise slipshod is peculiarly exasperating. Dryden, in his Preface to *The Tempest*, points out that Reginella of *The Goblins* (a romantic comedy) is " an open imitation of Shakespeare's Miranda ", and that " his spirits, though counterfeit, are copies of Ariel." A glance at Scene III of the fourth act, the best scene in the play, will at once

[1] *The Sad One*, IV, 3.
[2] *Aglaura*, IV, 4.

confirm the first statement; while Tamoren, the goblins' chief, is a sort of sham Prospero, and a passage like that beginning "I'll bring thee unto shady walks"[1] is just a Caliban speech dished up again; but the goblins themselves (who are really thieves with devils' pranks) are, I think, more reminiscent of the fairies of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which play was probably in his mind at the same time, seeing that the song "Welcome, welcome, mortal wight" is modelled on the charms of the *Dream*.

The Goblins and *Aglaura*[2] are the best of Suckling's plays. The latter, whose plot seems to have been borrowed from *The Revenger's Tragedy* (there are also echoes of Beaumont and Fletcher), is a very sanguinary affair,—"What have we here? A churchyard?" asks a character at the end.

Probably the most interesting thing about the plays is their manner of production. Suckling was one of the most lavish hosts of his time, and the sumptuousness of his entertainments caused astonishment even in that brilliant Court circle which was noted for anything but parsimony. To his house in Whitton repaired all the beauties and gallants of the day, not infrequently to witness the counterpart of the Court masques or some play which he had written and produced himself with the utmost splendour of costume and scenery. One magnificent dinner is said to have cost him several hundred pounds; and he afterwards presented each of the ladies with silk stockings, garters and gloves, "presents at that time of no contemptible value". How many ladies of fashion and beauty he courted is unknown; but Aubrey, with evident relish, mentions his having spent on one alone "some thousands of pounds". His poems are sprinkled with references to such unidentifiable persons as Lady D.E., Lutea Allison and Lady Seymour; but it is the daughter of the Constable of Beaumaris Castle, Anglesey,[3] who is the addressee of so many of his letters, and to whom he seems to have been most faithful (if, indeed, the word can be applied to so confirmed a misogamist). His

[1] Act III.

[2] There is an alternate fifth act (written probably at the King's request) changing it into a tragi-comedy.

[3] Sir Richard Bulkeley, Knight.

first play must have been named or written in her honour; and was "acted in Court and at the Blackfriars with much applause"[1] in 1637. It "cost three or four hundred setting out. Eight or ten suits of new clothes he gave the players, an unheard of prodigality"—especially as they were of the costliest materials and embroidered with pure gold-and-silver lace. The scenery was such as had hitherto been known only in masques. A folio edition of the play appeared within a year, the narrow channel of type and immense margins being the object of considerable ridicule.

His last play, *Brennoralt*, printed in 1640 as *The Discontented Colonel*, and intended as a sort of *Hamlet*, contains extended references to the First Bishops' War, for which miserable affair Suckling raised and equipped a hundred horse. A once famous ballad *Upon Sir John Suckling's Most Warlike Preparations for the Scottish War*[2] describes the sensation which the costly and showy scarlet coats, plumes and white doublets of his troopers caused in the north. Other topical allusions in the plays—to the Court, Platonic love, etc.—need not detain us.

Probably the most original of Suckling's writings are *A Ballad upon a Wedding* and *A Sessions of the Poets*. Moorman[3] points out that even Donne, innovator and iconoclast, had kept closely to the conventional wedding-ode, but that Suckling broke through all conventions and gave us instead of a formal epithalamium his great Ballad. It was immediately popular, was set to music, several times imitated, and still remains almost as famous as it should be. It is, for its exquisite simplicity and naturalness, its lightness and sureness of touch, its restraint, undoubtedly his masterpiece.

Compared with it, the *Sessions* is a careless piece of work containing most of his worst technical faults: halting rhythms, hideous contractions, and false rhymes. But it is very interesting both for the lifelike sketches of Jonson and of many of Suckling's fellow visitors to that

[1] Garrard in a Letter to Strafford (*Strafford State Papers*, February 7th, 1637–8).
[2] By Sir John Mennis (*Vox Borealis*, 1641).
[3] But he also repeats the statement that Lord Broghill's wedding was the occasion on which it was written, a statement for which there is no evidence whatsoever.

" college situated in a purer air ",[1] the house of Lord Falkland at Great Tew, whither resorted half the philosophers, theologians, poets and wits of the day ; and as being the first poem of its kind in the language, father of a large and hearty family. Spingyarn[2] has traced its source to Boccalini's *Ragguali di Parnaso* (1612), which Suckling probably read in the original, no English translation having appeared before this time, nor is it known whether French imitations had yet been made. It is extremely probable that Suckling knew Italian, when we consider his gift of languages and his visit to Italy. Rochester, Prior, Sheffield and Leigh Hunt all produced poems of the same *genre* : I have traced ten certain and several likely imitations and there are probably others. (Such earlier poems are Drayton's *Epistle to Henry Reynolds* have something of the manner.) " The form which became most popular in England ", says Spingyarn, " was that of *The Sessions of the Poets*, in which foreign mould was shaped to suit a truly English theme. . . . It is the old Elizabethan ' roll-call ' with its spirit changed and a zest added by the conception of a contest in the imaginary world which Boccalini had made real."[3]

It is not surprising to find a poet like Crashaw influenced by Marino, but to learn that Suckling also drew something direct from Italy is at first a shock. That, I suppose, is because he is still considered as a mere superficial and licentious courtier. A courtier he nearly always is, and most of his best things concern woman or women ; but it is forgotten that the author of *The Deformed Mistress* could show such spiritual feeling as this :

" O that I were all soul that I might prove
For you as fit a love
As you are for an angel ; for I know
None but pure spirits are fit loves for you.

You are all ethereal ; there is no dross,
Nor anything that's gross :
Your coarsest part is like a curious lawn,
The vestal relics for a covering drawn.

[1] Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*.
[2] *Seventeenth Century Critical Essays*.
[3] The poem was written between Jonson's death in 1637 and Davenant's succession to the Laureateship in 1638.

Your other parts, part of the purest fire
That e'er Heaven did inspire,
Make(s) every thought that is refined by it
A quintessence of goodness and of wit."

His range and limitations have already been touched on. *His Dream* :

" On a still silent night, scarce could I number
One of the clock, but that a golden slumber
Had locked my senses fast, and carried me
Into a world of blessed felicity "—

(like the Ballad and parts of the plays) shows his flair for narrative and what with more application he might have done in this line.

Sometimes, as in one of the two poems *Against Fruition*, Suckling can be quite epigrammatic :

" Stay here, fond youth, and ask no more, be wise :
Knowing too much long since lost paradise.
. . . . .
Urge not 'tis necessary. Alas ! we know
The homeliest thing which mankind does is so ;
The world is of a vast extent, we see,
And must be peopled ; Children there must be.
So must bread too. But since there are enough
Born to the drudgery, what need we plough ?
. . . . .
And as in prospects we are there pleased most
Where something keeps the eye from being lost
And leaves us room to guess, so here restraint
Holds up delight that with excess would faint.
They who know all the wealth they have are poor ;
He's only rich that cannot tell his store."

Although we can at once tell Suckling in " There never yet was woman made ", " Honest lover, whatsoever ", " Never believe me if I love "; he sometimes strikes a note rare in poets of his kind :

" Well-shadowed landskip, fare ye well :
How I have loved you none can tell,
At least so well
As he that now hates more
That e'er he loved before.

But, my dear nothings, take your leave :
No longer must you me deceive,
Since I perceive
All the deceit, and know
Whence the mistake did grow."[1]

There are few better examples of the " answer poem " (Marlowe and Sidney gave the most famous) than " Out upon it " and the reply by his friend Sir Toby Matthews.

Though too careless to be of much interest prosodically, Suckling's stanza forms are varied, sometimes unusual and often perfect. He required a severer discipline of form than ordinary blank verse demands ; the plays are therefore chaotic, but he seems to have made more effort to master his material in *Brennonalt*, his last play. He could write good octosyllabics :

" My whining lover, what needs all
These vows of life monastical ?
Despairs, retirements, jealousies,
And subtle sealing-up of eyes ? "

and is sometimes successful with trisyllabic feet, as in " A health to the nut-brown lass ". He even attempted, though without success, the swinging fourteener.

Although Suckling did not confine himself entirely to love-songs, it is they that have been most famous—the models which almost every poet had before him during the second half of the century. Katherine Philips, Stanley, Rochester and smaller men like that shameless plagiarist Robert Baron were all direct imitators ; while a host of others from Carew to Sedley caught something of his manner. Though less dignified as a man than Lovelace, he was more consistently good in his writings ; though lacking as a poet the finish of Carew, he sometimes even excels him. His plays were among the first to be revived at the Restoration, and his letters long remained popular. Suckling, in short, is an uneven poet, but his range is greater than is generally supposed.

TERENCE HEYWOOD.

[1] The third stanza becomes bad Donne.

THE FLOWER

(To F. Thompson)

HE roamed the pathways of the wild,
And tossed upon the tumbling waves;
Behind the clouds the great sun smiled,
The shouting laughter of a child
Re-echoed from the caves!
He sang among the singing stars,
And leapt between the grinning bars
Of moonlit cloud. He saw the urgent day
Fast-creeping on the dark with ghostly light;
He saw the first white flake of snow obey
A thought of God, and smiled to see it white.

On the earth he found a flower
Hidden in a trailing spray,
And he blessed that falling hour,
And he blessed that summer day;
It was a plant that lit the rolling spheres!
A growing thought that wakened joy to tears!

MARGERY SMITH.

LOVE'S AWAKENING

IN mid-October—now it is sweet May—
I sent to you the message of my verse
In which, in plaintive wise, I might rehearse
The death of Love upon an autumn day.
The wailing wind had sent the leaves astray
And winter's herald failed to reimburse,
But hinted that December would bring worse—
The frost and snow upon a darkened way.
But now the earth is clothed in robes of spring
And Love has risen from her lowly bed;
What seemed her death was but a winter sleep,
And I can scarcely think that once I said
Sweet Love was dead and buried in the deep,
For in the orchard glades I hear her sing.

T. PITTAWAY.

HANDS

LIKE wond'rous flowers
Are hands, five-petalled, shaped of blood and flesh.
They hold our earthly hours.
No ancient charm could thus enmesh
With e'en its lotus-circled spell
The whole compound of human bliss and woe,
As hands can hold within their shell
Our fate,—be it salvation,—doom.

Hands come and loom,
White, snowy visions. Lo!
They touch our feebly throbbing life;
Their movement is a rite of lilies sweet,
Though 'midst their daily care they seem to rife
For worship meek. Yet bless them if you meet
Their touch. They come from secret lands
Of sacred mysteries—those Mother-hands.

Then Orchids,—frail,
A sprig of moody bloom
That swings and sways beneath the April skies,
Adorned by Nature, only fit for eyes
That gleam with passion.
Yet in their depths there broods an evil gloom.
Beware! They shape and fashion
The hearts of pilgrims questing for the Grail.
Till, broken chalices, they are not fit to hold
The holy wine of Life with all its gleaming gold.

Like buds of scarlet, glowing fierce,
Are fists of warriors, heroes keen!
The silent mornings, drowsy eves
But find them listless, till with sudden sheen,
A sword sprung from its sheath,
A fiery shaft shall pierce
Their closely furled, shut leaves.
The power of deeds will force them open
To leave them broken,—
To fold them pale and cold in death.

Then nails like thorns that smother blowing boughs.
A hand that is a house
  Sepulchral, damp, with treasures cold.
  Hands with an iron hold,
Alert and sleepless, wide-awake
They merge in timeless passion while they shake
  The dice of Luck. Like shadows fleet
They fall upon their prey.
Hands dead—and grey,
    Of sinew and of bone;
  Ah!—Tortured roots, . . . you meet
    And coil upon the curséd stumbling-stone.
In Klingsor's garden grown, a poison-weed
Are withered hands of greed.

Of earthly things the loveliest sight
For envious gods, unsheltered from their might,
  Yet trustful, as beneath the wings of Dawn
  The crocuses stand out against the lawn,
Yet oft entwined with wiry stalks,
Live flames, they leap wherever walks
  The spirit gay of Spring;—they challenge Fate,
Not to be sundered even if they faced
  The storms of chaos ultimate,—
The hands of lovers interlaced.

In glassy gloom of emerald deep,
  In monstruous caverns of the sea,
Where 'neath the corals flow and weep
    The secret streamlets of the earth,—
    By darkness sun-removed thus given birth
The eager fingers, pallid hands,
  Sway to and fro in constancy;
A bunch of tentacles that bends
  To grasp its victim, any bait.
Sea-anemones, half ossified,
In readiness to spring—or hide,
  The hands of Cain wait.

The queen of night that only grows
Once every hundred years, the mystic rose,
  That holds the dew of gardens Eden-far,
Unsullied, with its dazzling gleam,
  The messenger of God,—a lonely star
Set on His garment's seam,
  With beauty sweeping over petty days
  Of human midgets, showing lofty ways
To desert-wanderers,—thus hands of builders hold
The gem of Art and Truth, unswaying, bold.

  Oh! these are hands that shape our heart and mind,
  They played upon the lute of Homer blind,
Their movement's ritual will live and last,
And overbridge the chasm of Future, Past.
  They bring us gifts, eternal spikenard,—
  The hands of Pheidias,—of Leonard.

Oh hands! You wondrous flowers,
  Five-petalled, shaped of blood and flesh,
  Untiringly who charm, enmesh
Our hearts within the circle of your spell,
Hold up your precious cups. Perhaps there fell
  Flames pentecostal, somewhere,—lighting hours
  Of deepest dark with fiery showers.
Hands, clutched or groping blind, now open wide,—
The Lord might chose, yea! each of you to hide
  His Spirit's kindling seed within your hold.
Oh hands! For once be filled
As God has willed,
  With His eternal true, imperishable gold!

Buda-Pest. "CLOUDRIDER."

AFTER THE SONG

SHORE-SEEKING hands, current-mastered,
Weakening, wistful endeavours,
Throes of a dying vibration.
Sink in abysmal absorption.

Salvage from silence unfathomed,
Jetsam of overwhelmed music,
Cheating the tide, drifts a fancy:
This will I hold as a keepsake.

ALBERT E. DEWEY.

O TIME, STAND STILL

O TIME, stand still. If never yet before
An answer has been given this urgent prayer
Ten million times repeated at your door
To die unsatisfied in groans away:
And even if thousands have deserved this boon
And yet have been denied: although the one
Who calls upon you now has wasted noon
And night and morn, and has not served you well—
Despite all this—stand still, O Time, stand still.
Now, here, oh let me stay. Save me, oh save,
Before I prove that what men love they kill;
While yet the holy city stands at dawn
Not trampled underfoot: while yet this hand
Stretched out to take the apple has not seared its bloom:
While yet the virgin snow still clothes the land
Torn by no footmark: ere the silver laugh
Sounds as base metal: ere the harp string snaps,
Or exquisite jewellery yields the golden calf:
Before the eager finger turns the page
To seek the dazzling words within the book:
While yet no day has dawned of that dark age
When flaming swords scream "Innocence is lost!"
... Time, if you could, you would grant this to me;
Your pitying heart must mourn your impotence
To be my saviour.... O poor Time, I see
Salvation must be sought on other roads,
Immortal, infinite, in kingdoms past your power,
Where I can find deliverance from the death
That my own hand can bring me in this hour.
... The only charity Time has to offer men
Is the cold pledge that even as this day
Of joy may fade, so hours of grief and dread
Are likewise transient, and will pass away:::
While still eternal love lies hidden by the years.

RHODA E. CUTBUSH.

NOVEMBER MORNING

NOVEMBER
Stripped of all superfluity,
Moist leaves
Clinging to blue-veined feet.
Strange light of other worlds
Shows through transparent flesh
Hazy with recollection
Half submerged.

This is the hour when, world sleeping,
An answering glow spreads over
Haggard hope.
Limitless mornings range the new-rinsed sky
Arching all days,
Beneath whose gauze
A galley might sail up the shining street
Creaking her rhythmic oars,
Processional feet
Wind through the rose lit pillars of the East
Down to Homeric seas.

Day broadens, thickens into middle age,
The street grows muddy,
Pocked with rain.
Evening alone, grown indistinct, sea blue,
Brings recollection and a half return.

BRENDA F. SKENE.

A REFUGEE DUE FOR DEPORTATION CHEATS THE GESTAPO

A LITTLE while he sheltered in our green,
Heard the safe church bells, went his morning ways,
Told his dazed heart the past had never been,
Lived here some calm, unthreatened human days.

Yet knew his mortal sands were sinking fast—
Back to the Camp again, his three months by;
They found him in his blood that day, his last—
"Here if I may not live at least I'll die."

REDCLIFFE McKIE.

TO ANY BRITISH SOLDIER IN FRANCE

AND so you too shall hear the great guns sound
And with your comrades tread heroic ground
Not understanding ; yet within your hands
The Chalice rests bare of its hiding bands,
For you each moment breathes a rarer breath
And life exulting shares her room with death.

Now are you part of that great godlike tale
Of those who in Valhalla feast for aye,
And you with Arthur's Knights seeking the Grail
Join the immortal ranks of chivalry;
Your strong Crusade strikes upward to the light
Scorning the shadowy baseness of our fears,
Though perilous the day and dark the night
Yet you are one with Roland and his peers.

LETTICE HAFFENDEN.

HANNABELL

HARSH worded jeers can never quell
The fancied lies of Hannabell,
Who would her happiest moments spend
In slandering an absent friend.
She cannot tell, nor dream the harm
Her careless words of false alarm
Might have on those who foolishly
Drink in her mock sincerity.
O pass her by, or close an ear
Should you perchance by her be near,
For oft a word in thoughtless jest
Leads one on many an endless quest. F. T. BRATTON.

Our very active member and contributor, Dorothy Sproule, who is a member of the Executive Council of the Montreal Branch of the Royal Empire Society and whose fifth volume of verse, *Bread and Roses*, has had a very cordial Canadian press, with letters of praise from Lord and Lady Tweedsmuir, the Prime Minister of Canada and other dignitaries, has received an even more gratifying recognition in a booklet of poems addressed to her. We agree with the compiler, Gordon Le Claire, that " such a collection of lyrical eulogies by fellow-poets is so unique as to be something of a miracle." They are worthy of one who in her work has, with Keats, attempted to prove that " Poetry should be a friend To soothe the cares and lift the thoughts of man."

SPAN-FOOT VERSE IN (— ,,)

IN previous issues of THE POETRY REVIEW of this year we considered the possibilities of "fusing sound with sense" in four of our standard measures; now we propose to consider the fifth.

We saw that any child of average ability could be taught to write verse, not necessarily poetry, in those measures which begin the foot with a flick (, —) or (, — ,) or (, , —); but that no one could write verse of any length in a measure which begins the foot with a stroke (— ,) or (— , ,) and still ensure this "fusion of sound and sense."

The reasons for this limitation have been stated already; and here there is no need for repetition of these. In the March issue we considered the problem as it concerns verse in (— ,); and now we proceed to examine that in (— , ,).

Even Swinburne, our greatest expert in three-time verse, has failed to leave us a poem of any length as an example of perfect fusion in (— , ,). Possibly he never tried to make one; probably he would not have succeeded if he had tried. While it is undeniable that his spans of thought and his feet of verse reach the highest forms of expression, it is equally obvious that he failed to fuse them as sense with sound. This makes one wonder if he realized the possibilities of doing so, in view of the fact that he had a superb mastery of "forcing technique."

Temperamentally Swinburne seems to have been inclined, in dealing with three-time verse, to play with it as a wayward child would rather than as a reasoning adult; and the effect is most delightful. Some critics summarily assert that he is playing with tinkling cymbals; some that he cannot keep to his tune, for if he begins a line in (— , ,) he slips in the next line into (, — ,), and then into (, , —), or muddles them all up in the same line; but all agree that he is a great poet, a master of thought and of sound. Does the secret of his shortcoming lie in an inability to synchronise? Or, in an inability to recognize the *need* for fusion of spans of thought with metrical feet of sound? If he had considered the question, would he not have tried the experiment?

In "Nephelidia," for example, where he was obviously "all out for stretching himself," he tries to express the elusive movement of (— , ,) again and again without being able to make a single line of it in pure form. He may begin with a single stroke (such as: these, flushed, gaunt, etc.) or with a stroke-flick (such as: pallid, thicken, fainter, etc.), but he promptly slips into another movement, for his technical skill is not equal to carrying on with (— , ,); and the result is a continual crossdraw between sense and sound. Yet from another point of view, "Nephelidia" is a great technical "tour de force," as an exhibition of agglomerations of alliterations, from a master hand. Is it possible that he did not realize the value of such trisyllables as "Poetry" (— , ,) to open a line and steady the run of the rhythm throughout?

Poets other than Swinburne have felt the urge to express themselves in the " dancing movement " of (— , ,) without signal success. Many of them failed to keep to the rhythm further than the first foot, then slipped into another measure. Consider, for example :

Memory . . .	Noyes
Margaret . . .	Sassoon
Vanity . . .	C. Rossetti
Wearily, drearily . . .	W. Morris
How will I hold myself . . .	J. Pudney

Other poets make more determined efforts to preserve a semblance of (— , ,) as the dominant measure, inevitably slipping out of it, but courageously returning to it :

One more Unfortunate	Hood
Where shall the Lover rest	Scott
Just for a handful of silver	Browning
Half a league	Tennyson
Swallow, my sister	Swinburne
Bird of the Wilderness	Hogg
Out in the meadows	Gosse
Wisely a Woman prefers	J. Hay

None of these poems however can be said to be good examples of (— , ,) movement ; the rhythm crossdraws far too frequently with the thought, and the thought insists on continuous changes in the rhythm. Yet where the giants of the past have failed, it is still possible that the giants of the future will succeed ; but to this end there must be adequate preparation in technique. Once again let us remember that poet and musician may be " born, not made " ; but let us not forget that we insist on a musician learning his scales and exercises as a preliminary, so let us admit the possibility of training without destroying individuality even in " a poet born."

The need for special training in (— , ,) facilities becomes all the more apparent when we realize that " sense-with-sound " verse cannot begin a foot with an article (a, an, the), or a preposition (in, at, to, etc.) ; and that it has been seriously handicapped by the loss of hundreds of inflexional endings through Norman influence. Examination will show the possibility of alternatives :

(1) Span-foot verse in (— , ,) as a " tour de force."

(2) Span-foot verse in (— , ,) switched into (— , ,) or (, — ,).

Outside these alternatives there remains the common procedure :

(3) Mixed threes (— , ,) (, — ,) (, , —) or anyhow.

(4) Mixed threes, with an occasional misflick (into two-time).

We should note that the first two preserve the mathematical basis of *rhythm* ; the last two are makeshifts. Let us look at examples of each kind :

12. Timothy and Margaret

Timothy	watches her	slyly ( )
Margaret	passes him	shyly ( )

Amorous	nightingales	sing to them
Whispering	urgences	spring to them
Each of them	hesitates	wondering
Both of them	foolishly	blundering :
		" Good Evening."

1b. Government Offices

Government	Offices	authorise	schemes
Catechise	satirise	cauterise	dreams
Organise	methodise	legalise	plans
Supervise	patronise	specialise	bans
Improvise	compromise	jeopardise	brains
Mobilise	maximise	minimise	pains
Formalise	symbolise	memorise	rotes
Modernise	polarise	pulverise	motes
Magnetise	galvanise	hypnotise	youth
Eulogise	mesmerise	exorcise	truth
Idolise	dogmatise	humanise	ranks
Crystallise	fossilise	advertise	cranks
Vitalise	temporise	victimise	grit
Moralise	tyrannise	tantalise	wit
Egotise	emphasise	vocalise	pose
Colonise	centralise	civilise	woes
Synthetise	scandalise	terrorise	states
Neutralise	sterilise	fertilise	dates
Recognise	subsidise	realise	powers
Poplarise	stigmatise	penalise	ours

2a. (— / / , , —)

Life /	for the men	who have fought	for their brothers
Meed /	for the days	they have lost	of their youth
Think /	of the gift	that they gave	to us others
Rise /	to the height	of their love	and their truth

2b. (— , / / , — ,)

Trekking /	the pathless	with danger	bestud
Struggling /	with devils,	by angels	misled
Fighting /	in trenches	and craters	of blood
Wounded /	with mangled	and dying	with dead

2c. (— , , / — , , / / — / , , —)

Come to me	echoing	songs	of the days
Happiness	wove for us	nests	in the sprays
Peacefulness	called to us	deep	from the leaves
Joyousness	treasured us	grain	from the sheaves

Sing to me	madrigals	tuned	to the leas
Mistlesong	trilling us	joys	of the trees
Blackbird ( )	mellowing	thrills	of the lawn
Skylark ( )	wirelessing	themes	from the dawn
Presences	vanishing	while	we rejoice
Orbiting	evermore	come	as a Voice

As for *Mixed Threes*, including those with a misflick pause, although we can find many examples of single lines in English poems I cannot find a single example where any such line runs as a pattern through even a short poem. Herein lies a great opportunity for our rising poets with a flair for " new metres "; and it may encourage them to know that I have made several poems running true to metric type, without crossdrawing with the sense, as indicated in the following first lines :

a. Opera / plays for us / a music / to thrill
b. Come with me / and wander / o'er mountain / and valley
c. Radical / as surgeon / for vested / abuse
d. Here we are / flying / aeroplane / in clouds
e. Clamorous / voices / are flying / the round
d. Motionless / monotone / heaven / pauses / awhile

While it is probable that such mixed rhythms may not please us as singlets, it is possible that the repetition of the pattern may when the ear grows more accustomed to the combinations ; for it must be confessed that the haphazard, unregulated " Mixed Threes " that have hitherto posed as dactylic, amphibrachic, or anapaestic verse in English have given most of us great pleasure, though the audition has been troubled by forcing tactics in metre and warping practice in pronunciation, with a sacrifice of sound or sense as a frequent alternative.

Under such conditions we may judge that *ear training* in each of the three-times has become an essential preliminary for any poet as well as any versifier. Examples of the types of word (trisyllabic, if a singlet for a foot), or of phrase (if otherwise), can be noted from the examples given ; and practice in using them can be had by frequent repetition of the following proverbs made for the purpose :

NEW PROVERBS IN (— , ,)

Lullaby	themes	Buttercups	please us	
Heavenly	dreams	Violets	ease us	
Honeybees	hum to me	Prisoners	register	crime
Songs of you	come to me	Justices	register	time
Musical	symphonies	charm us		
Cacophone	infamies	harm us		

Miserly satirists croak at us
Generous humorists joke at us

Pedagogue principles frequently blame
Corporal punishments possibly tame

Obstinate characters seem to us gritty
Pliable plausibles draw from us pity

Friendships (may seem to be suddenly leaving you
Look on them not (as if needlessly grieving you

Such a scheme may be expanded to include :

NEW PROVERBS IN (— , ,) SWITCHED

, — , —
News for us / is brought | Parliament / debating
Sterilised / of thought | Citizens / are waiting

, , —
Interviews / are as traps
Functioning / with their snaps

Students will not fail to note that in the normal type of (— , ,) it is easier to find a rime if one or two flicks are missing at the end of the last foot ; also that in the last example four flicks sound together—and this seems to be an unpardonable agglomeration in English rhythm.

N.B.—Here it is well to repeat that as our ears are not familiar with any of the above patterns as running truly through a poem, these deserve more " trying out " than space here can afford ; also that as our ears are familiar with the procedure of " swopping rhythms " even when crossing the width of a line, a little discipline may prove an advantage. The demerits in the examples given are not necessarily attributable to any weakness of the system ; they may be owing to my failure to give them adequate presentation.

W. H. STEPHENS.

We admire the handsome large quarto of *Poems* by Members compiled and published by the Hyderabad (Deccan) Centre of The Poetry Society. The cover design reproduces the world-famous Ajanta frescoes in the façade of cave No. 2, (about sixth century A.D.) and the brochure is printed entirely on Hyderabad hand-made paper. The contributors, who " seek to find in all poor foolish things that live a day Eternal Beauty wandering on her way "—W. B. Yeats' definition of their intentions, finely carried out, include Harindranath Chattopadyaya, Nizamat Yung, James H. Cousins, E. E. Speight and other POETRY REVIEWERS, and in Hindustani Maharaja Sir Kishen Pershad Bahadur Prince Moazam Jah Bahadur, Agha Mohammed Ali and Hashim Amir Ali.

PORTRAIT

I SHEW you the young virgin in love,
Stretching her sun-burnt limbs exultantly
Up two flights of stairs in the country inn.

The dark green walls go up and up. Protect
Her and enclose her like tall trees. Below
All doors are shut. She goes to solitude.

The darkness is punctuated by flames
From bare gas jets full of sounding colour:
They light the private pleasure on her face,

Cast shadows on her lightly-stepping limbs.
She is content and tall as an ostrich,
Not eager now. Each minute is a dream.

II

Charmed as never by acknowledged beauty
She loves the rosy paper in her room
The walls familiar—beautiful as Spring,

Thanks Heaven it's not artistic, bought at Heal's!
The details of the pattern fascinate
Like lovely coloured cards in childhood's time.

With hands beneath her head she lies undressed,
Gazes with half closed eyes at jaunty bows
Eying the rose-filled baskets on the walls

But seeing always with her different eyes
The tranquil grass on which her lover lay
Asleep but she acknowledging the sun.

3

The gas is singing in a monotone
Her eyes fall shut, she hears the insect's whirr
The drowsing, dreaming notes of summer bee.

Behind her eyelids many colours float—
Elusive, burning mauves of coal gas flame,
An ice blue cone and then the sunlight comes.

A lovely night—from dim light she looks out
To darkness, but above the stars set deep.
Verily her head seems with them, quiet

Burns, not conscious, lost in spaces
Of the night, inanimate connection
With the breeze, harmonious with the sky.

4

Within a minute recapitulates
The story of her life, the million years
Of Homo-sapiens growth from twilight time.

All stages of awakening consciousness
She lives, sways backwards, forwards, sensual
To touch of breeze and garden scents below;

Till finally her eyes unclose. They see
The stars shine moistly as with dew. They seem
Like faces of dawn flowers. She wants to feel,

Smell, taste them, still unconscious of her sight.
Then suddenly co-operation comes
The senses join. The night breaks on her head.

5

The thin white flame of man's intelligence
Shoots high. She knows the stars, the evening hush,
Day's ecstasy and all her yearning love,

Thoughts come and beat their wings invisibly
In her wide mind. She knows it is a cage
To which love holds the key. Education

Put them in but locked the door. Knowledge slept
Expressionless, but now its birds would sing,
As singing she turns back into the room

And leans her head against the wall,
Dim gaslight mingling red tones with her hair
Minting true gold from it " incomparable."

6

She knows beyond her window countless plants
Rise to the harvest, acres of green wheat
Polished by the Sun, understands the hedge

Mingling its fruit and blossom, leaf and bird
In English season's medley, summer, spring
Unite in bud and seed, flowering and death.

So she within her holds all season's pride
Like English July, like an English tree
Beautiful in her long blossomy spring

When pink-veined petals stand up to the winds
When early summer leaves are thin and bright
When Autumn comes and Winter's pattern shews.

7

Now conscious of her beauty as a power
She longs to spill it as the sun its rays
As fire and water burns and cools the earth.

Her wide flame narrows to a point of light
Burns fierce, directed on one object now
For beauty concentrates within love's form.

She must receive and also she must give
Mould and be moulded—fundamental law
Of life's most humble cell—she is afraid.

And in that terror, in that lovely lust
Lies germ of all compassion purely felt
The only sympathy with beasts and men.

M. E. Mitchell.

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

HOW strange a magic lies in Love's first glance
When swift as lightning cleaving summer skies
Two ambushed hearts leap up, and then advance
To make a sortie through the radiant eyes.

They storm a fort that is already won
And swim a stream that has been safely forded
Doing a deed that is already done
To gain a prize that straightway was awarded!

Elspeth Grahame.

POETA EXCLUSUS

With Apologies to R. B.

WE could have puked enigmas like these girls
And boys ye boost so. What's it all about?
Nightmares of infancy, fantastic twirls
Of tortured syntax, meaning swamped in doubt.
Omne Ignotum. . .! How the Gods must roar
Over the antics of the bardic ring:
Dictator Bill accepting "just one more!"
Irish, you see, or Welsh—"O, just the thing!"
No sense, no rimes, no metre, no technique,
Just words at random spilled about the page,
A pinch of talent and a pound of cheek
Go far to set young Hopeful on the stage.
Fiat!—the word goes forth, friend whispers friend:
"This lad's the goods"; the pundits take the hint,
The gossip-merchants chirrup, experts commend,
Schneider or Maximilian deign to print.
Whence comes it—for it comes—the august command
Two laws must strictly be obeyed—they are!
—To lend no "blasted amateur" a hand
Nor dare acclaim an unacknowledged star?
Once on the map the Minstrel's fortune's made
The T.L.S., the B.B.C. commend,
He's "one of us", a pro., he's in the Trade,
And God knows to what heights he may ascend,
Bar accidents, that is, for fashions veer
As veer the bleating plaudits of the Town,
Watson dethroned might teach the pygmies fear,
Not that their puny heads could fill his crown
Or bear its burden! Still, their luck is in,
The good log-rollers tend their protégés,
Contracts commissions puffs and fees begin,
Back-scratching earns its meed of fruitful praise.
Anthologies, "Best Poems" of the year,
Of ten years, twenty years, the Age, all time,
Hermes, *The Auditor*, *The Scrutineer*
Feature their job-lots of assorted rime
And crabbed conundrums; Readings, Book-Shows, Talks
And every Printer's Pie provide them plums,
Publicity attends their country walks
Or serenades their dreams with kettledrums.

And do they love it? Do they *not*! It spells
  Prosperity and something miscalled "fame"—
Milton thought otherwise, but Leavis tells
  The world *he's* napoo—Eliot says the same:
"To hell with Milton!" How should simple souls
  Presume to query this audacious ban?
Samson eclipsed when T.S.E. unrolls
  The Archbishop's doom? Believe it, if you can!
The operative word is "Murder": gauge
  On Boots' new-fiction shelves the pull of that—
No wonder Eliot's piece was all the rage:
  "In a Cathedral", did you say? My hat!
Let them get on with it! We, who have borne
  Lifelong exclusion from their coterie
Of self-anointed flamens, we forlorn
  Helots denied emprise of poesy
Or accolade of maistrie, none the less
  Worship the God, frequent the Muses' bower
Oblivious of the world's frown or caress,
  Tense for the opening of song's rapture-flower:
Just when despaired-of sometimes close at hand,
  Virgin of will's compulsion, brain's control,
Its patterned cadences flood sea and land
  From the dark Sinai of the oversoul.
Such our reward, for who that once has known
  Influx of Majesty whose breath is song
But feels that he has come into his own
  Nor rues the barren hours that seemed so long?
What of my verses then? Why should I care
  Whether they "linger here on earth" or vie
In transiency with roses, all things fair
  And her who loved them? Great it is to die.
Yet, since because my depths were inly stirred
  I fashioned them and sped them forth alive
Clad in the filmy substance of the word,
  All that they need they have whereon to thrive.
Sue for no favour, songs, ask no reprieve,
  My soul sustains your essence from her own:
Sound wind, strings, drums—let listeners in receive
  Your concert from the heart of the Unknown.

CHARLES WHITBY.

A PRIVATE HELL

AGAIN it comes—a moment since I walked,
I talked, I laughed, I dwelt with other men,
A man myself, and now a man no more
Because of this extraneous, evil thing
Beside me, round me, deep inside myself.
Onward we walk but not in City streets,
We are upon an open, barren heath
With one broad road, upon this road we walk,
—Nay, this thing walks, I stagger alongside
And yet I have to move, to keep in step
Although the earth is upside down and I
A quivering, boneless jelly, not myself.
To one same spot we go, one dark, grim place
Set in the heath, a black and beckoning hole.
The thing goes in, I follow, hating it,
Hating myself for going—yet I go.
Down in the well, down, down into the well,
Dark, slimy walls, no foothold, nowhere light,
Dark tunnel downwards, always dark and down.
A mocking echo keeps me company
Taunts me with every step, despises me
Yet forces me to listen to its voice.

Clear skies there were outside, the lights of men,
The friendliness of streets, the comradeship
Of jostling people, all the things I knew,
My daily habits, breakfast, morning pipe,
My work, books, games, the fire I used to tend,
The comfort of my room at dead of night.
Familiar things I clung to. "God" I cry,
"If I must journey here, let me forget
These things I loved and even love itself,
I have no part with you, I am despised,
Despicable, remote, then let me be
This thing apart, let me forget the rest."
But yet the voice mocks on as down we go,
Downwards to Hell and Hell in every step:
Down to the waters which shall suck me in,
Embed me in their mud. I pray for death
To end this crazy journey through the well.
But what is death? Perhaps no end at all,
Of all this terror, rather but a step
Towards my fear, this taunting, beastly thing

That brought me here, compels me down the well.
I cannot even wish for death below.

Still down I go, my fitful mind recalls
A picnic in the woods and she was there
And on her breast I lay, the trees were still,
Birds sang of love, the sun above our heads
Smiled kindly, but her smile was lovelier yet,
Her hand was clasped in mine, we two were one,
I was her knight, and more, she was my friend,
My lover in the wood. I knew not fear.
But now I am a feeble, jittering thing
Down in my well, all things are upside down,
My lungs are bursting from the cage of ribs,
My heart is panting wildly sending blood
Coursing in frenzied haste within its track,
My eyes are smarting with their bitter tears,
My ear drums beat to bursting point, my hands
Are clammy, my forehead sticky wet
Like some damp sponge forgotten after bath
Left full of soap, a slimy thing.
Yet I could bear with this if I but knew
What fear is here insisting that I come
Away from other men to its vile haunts.
I never reach the end, I never feel
The touch of water on my trembling skin.
Perhaps the well is bottomless, perhaps
I am not here at all, I only dream
And yet, and yet, I see the loathesome well,
I feel its slime, I know the sound of drips
Where water loses foothold on the wall.

Again it happens, as it always has,
I hear the water lapping down below
With grim foreboding in its quiet voice.
One moment I am following my fear,
And then a sudden start, a somersault,
A nothingness—and I upon the heath
Alone and frightened, yet no fear beside
And freedom to return again to men.
The well behind me, yet the well before
Because I have not plumbed the utmost depths
And drowned the fearsome thing that led me there.

I know it not, a bitter part of me
I have not understood, an inner fear
Creating Hell for me and waiting still
Like night-hawk after prey.
Back on the road
I fight my way to normal life again
Yet knowing not that moment which I dread,
That soul-destroying moment when the fear
I do not know and yet I know so well
Makes me a fugitive, a man pursued,
A fugitive, pursued, a fugitive . . .

ENID W. MARK.

A LOVER'S CAUTION

MY dear, since we have both lived long enough
To know that lovers' vows
Are unsubstantial stuff,
Baseless as words men mutter in their sleep
And utterly forget when they arouse,
Let us not waste these brief enchanted hours
On making promises we cannot keep,
Calling eternity from out the deep,
But let us take this love for what it's worth
As we take other fleeting joys of earth—
Clouds, bubbles, rainbows, butterflies and flowers.

And since we've both loved oft enough before
To know how feelings change,
And that we have no more
Power to influence love's birth and growth
And death than rule a meteor, is it strange
That we, who have discovered to our sorrow
That " always " is a mirage, should be loth
To swear to its real presence under oath ?
No, let's be frank and make no other vow
Save that we love each other here and now,
And if fate will, remake it on the morrow !

E. F. A. GEACH.

Miss Elizabeth Jane Hughes, of Wrexham, has bequeathed £300 to the Welsh National Eisteddfod Association for a prize for lyrical poetry.

JOB STEPS OUT

ONE day, compact of pain, Job sighed from sleep,
The wind dug inwards, cold, unfriendly, and
For ever hasting on without a care.
It seemed as if the over-passioned world
Burdened with thoughts that could not be exalted
Crouched for him, scowling on his misery.
The distant murmur of the living world,
The thunder and the bass of wheel and wheel,
He thought was like the ceaseless lion roar
Of an everlasting Hate. He looked upon
The first ennobled brethren of the clouds,
And Hell looked with him, master of his heart.
He could not see himself in that bright world,
He sat among the stones and knew them best.

" Oh promise of the dust, that yet refrains
To come with death and hide me from the earth,
Almost I have become as blind as you.
To-day I will seek out the desert places
Away from man, a shadow there among
The shadows of the stones I'll make my bed
And see the part of God that is in loneliness."

" Oh Thou whose promise blossoms in each flower,
Whose thoughts are marked upon the heaven with stars
Forever lighting lamps of life, let me
Not see too much the dust that is myself,
Surely sorrow pours out of me O God,
Now all the deserts lie within my soul.
Oh Thou whose sunsets are Compassion's hands
Leading the steps of sleep to make us strong,
Whose seas reflect Thy daily art, let all
My pain keep bounded in my soul
Alone with Thee. Let my own hell not speak
Or wander overmuch Oh God, I would
Not darken earth with what is only mine
And this will vanish when I see Thy Face."

His sickness burned. Among huge stones he stepped,
Or crawled in the familiar dust and did
Not feel the grit upon his sores for he
Was watching sorrows briars and stinking weeds
Creeping about the darkness of his mind.

His empty hands could only clasp a stone
That once held riches in delightful ease,

Security that was the sweetest wisdom—
Love in a frolic, life all unafraid—
The cup that suffices, the fruit that's sweet—
And man's esteem that only walks on flowers—
Honours that only grow in sunny places—
The joyful song of the lover of love—
Comfortable policy and safe wisdom—
While there beside him with the sweetest words,
Lips, moulded to endearments and acclaim.
When he was with the world and both were glad.

Sometimes a lone rejoicing cricket sung
Of love and freedom. But not a rock or tree
But had a heart of sorrow. Dust was in
His eyes and in his mouth; and dusty, sear,
And bare, the forward vistas of his mind.
Who dwelt within this valley, cold and still
And dead, as if old Death himself were there
Crawling among the stones with sombre glee
And whispering "Nevermore." These stones and rocks
Seem broken by the hammers of the Gods,
And surely this cold air was breathed only
From the world-forsaken throat of brooding pain.

Dazed, with many a fall he came to where
A mighty pit sank down to mystery,
From which a murmur rose far, far away.
Of hopeless misery. Listening amazed,
He saw a hooded shape coming towards him
As if it waited. From out its cloak a pale
Face peered . . .
Sometimes beneath a gallows-tree
Long, long a brother of the solitudes
A homeless spirit stands, his only motion
A shivering like the grasses on a hill,
And his still eyes peer out expressionless
As winter's streams of ice. Something like him
Was this most awful Shape. Around the head
A pale light hung like summer mist, which came
From some unsoured compassion in his soul,

And where the ringing screams shriek and echo
In dreadful hollow howling bowels of Hell
This light is known, and many a breaking soul
Has heard his voice with wonder, and with slow
And unused groping infant wing the deep
Heart's ecstasies stir again, and sometimes Hope
Springs up and crowns itself within some heart
And every rock points out a path to joy
And Love is almost conscious of itself.

He stood as one apart. He walked as one
Forever listening to the dark designs of death.
Yet as one looked upon that awful face
It seemed Despair had not yet claimed the spirit.
The eyes were as the eyes as of some forlorn
Forgotten god looking for evermore
On worlds passing away, till beauty and song
Is but a whisper of the homeless wind.
Energies, aspirations, divinings of Hell
That make a heel-crushed servitude of pain.
What vision, strength and undecaying hope
Gave that deep brow the majesty of power?
As that dread soul stood there it seemed he was
A statue of Endurance and on his smooth
Firm face his spirit shone like gentle sunlight
On the marble bones and intellectual eyes.

"Who comes like sorrow here creeping in gloom
A minister of pain," he spoke in rolling tones.
"There's not a worm will ever love the sun.
But save your words, I know you well, too well.
It was my thought that drew you here, for you
Through many a foul morass and vale of torn
And writhing souls have I just fared in pain."

"Unearthly Shape, I have no knowledge of you."

"Why do you sing of sorrow and desolation."

"I do not sing. I live, and brood, and bear."

" Your sorrows have a rising voice indeed ;
Like every storm, so clamorous to be heard :
The winds find resting feet but you cannot."

" But let me know—who is my glorious master ?
Are you then God, although I see no fire
Except that smouldering in your awful eyes."

" God only speaks through ministers. In Hell we have
No names, we are the children of death and sorrow.
Month after month I wander in the dark,
And yet above Hell's dolour I can hear
Your spirit groaning with such weighty things.
Why are you prodigal of your calamity ? "

" I am a man."

" Is man then like the grass that bows to earth
With every wind. Tell me, what do you see ? "

" Heads bowed to listen to a crying heart.
The encumbrance of these bones upon the earth."

" What do you hear when you are with yourself ? "

" Cold hearts crying to an empty heaven."

" How patiently you listen ! What do you *feel ?* "

" A wall around me that I cannot see
And on my heart a weight with clutching hands."

" These very things have I now known for centuries
But found that I am stronger than them all.
And so I bear : and yet, if I could once
More walk the earth each hour would yield some beauty.
I think that I should linger over things
With all the fresh surprise of some young God
Stumbling upon the first unfolding rose."

" But every prisoner smells a phantom rose."

" Oh true and earnest Job, that rose is seen
Only within the garden of regrets.
In Hell it is the only sweetness found,

But woe to him who stoops to drink its breath,
Which turns to pain. Dream only of the flowers
And hearken to the greatest truth of all :—
Life is the great obsession of the soul,
And of this madness we shall not be cured."

CHARLES WOODHOUSE.

MEDITERRANEAN NOON

SLEEP ! for the sighing of a troubled world
Is not for you. Here, drowsy honey bees
Still murmur faintly over scented blooms
That brush their bodies with a golden kiss,
Still climb in ecstasy the lily spires
Whose waxen beauty glistens in the sun.

The light, caressing finger of the wind
Silvers the glossy leaves of olive trees
Like water splashing over dark green rocks.
At the shore's edge stand scarred and withered pines ;
The water gently sucks their roots, and turns
Their very sap as salt as mermen's blood.

The peacock sea is crested with white smoke ;
Above it, long cloud-galleons slowly sail.
A dove streaks out, a lone white questing ghost
Reflecting the sea-glitter ; meets the wind,
Is tilted back like a blown leaf, then wheels,
And whirls away, a speck of drifting thought.

Sleep ! While grapes ripen in untroubled warmth.
The faces of the girls have that same bloom,
As there they climb, strong, graceful, heavy laden
With high-piled baskets and stone water-jars.
Sleep ! Life is quiet, lovely—hear the sigh
Of tideless waters under rose-hot sun.

Yet, is that thunder—out of skies as blue
As robe of saint enshrined in stained-glass dome ?
It is the darkling echo of a voice,
A mighty nation's cry, that rises anguished
From fields where men are sowing death's drear crop
With leaden seeds from squatting, thin-lipped guns. . . .

Majorca. MARGUERITE EDGELOW.

LUNATIC

YOU make vainglorious boasts and brag of power,
Usurping lordship for a passing hour,
Like ghosts that flit across a darkened stage,
You laugh and weep and storm with madman's rage.
You act alternately the knave and fool,
Sport cap and bells, play pedagogue at school,
With cunning fore-sight you lay schemes and plans,
Ape saints and sinners, gods and charlatans.
You pull the strings, your puppets come to blows
Like marionettes in punch and judy shows.
You trace the evolution of mankind
Thro' dense primeval forests of your mind,
And delve for treasure under ancient sods,
Dissect creation and set up false gods.
The tree of knowledge bears a bitter fruit
When love turns sour and graft attacks the root.
Ill-gotten gains bring leanness to your soul,
Hate runs amok and love lives on the dole.

A little lower than the angels, was your fate—
How have you fallen from your high estate!
Your playbox once was full of brand-new toys—
What God has made your wantonness destroys.
Your noisy engines are a bane and curse,
Your hobby horses rock the universe;
You borrow the destroying angel's wings
And desecrate the noblest, holiest things,
From war's alarums there is no surcease
The price of bar-gold is the price of peace.
You sling barb'd arrows to the ends of earth,
And broadcast poison to the peaceful hearth.
You steal the secrets of the steadfast stars,
Run races with the fabled men of Mars,
Unloose hell's hounds and bait the little Bear,
But never tell your beads nor say a prayer.
And as the wine of flattery you drink,
So does your soul like cider apples shrink.
You sell your birthright for a pauper's dole—
A mess of pottage for a living soul.

When in the wilderness you find no grass,
You bray discordantly as Balaam's ass,
The very stones cry out, no longer dumb

To see, O Judas, what you have become
And now you see the world in ruins laid,
The charnel house and shambles you have made,
Your heart with fear and dread is growing sick—
Your heart is failing you, O lunatic!

EDITH M. WALKER.

HELEN

IN Sparta and along the Trojan shore
Rumour came vaunting
Her oracles, her stolen secrets flaunting
Of Helen, and her fame's prolific store:
Of Paris, and his gifts of pearl and jade,
Of Crania's island and the home it made,
Of shape, the chivalry of Greece denied
A mortal origin, and deified.

And Helen, what of you? Did you think much
Of neck and shoulder,
Of listed loveliness that could not moulder,
Of beauty earthen sorrow could not touch?
Yes, for a mortal frail as cloud was there,
Of immortality yet unaware,
And to rejoice in what men warred to see
And died in lauding, was scarce vanity.

Ah! but there came a time and that swift-hasting,
When the pool's water
Gave back the beauty of your own granddaughter,
Then were your wonted sophistries found wasting:
Did you then envy those who had not known
Beauty, pinnacled splendour and a throne,
Fame, and the fierce incinerating joy
That burnt the terraces and towers of Troy?

I see you at your mirror one grieved night,
The lamp oil ebbing,
Spiders in marbled nooks their meshes webbing,
Reviewing in close thought the Trojan fight:
Or do you but regret sun-woven hair,
A form god-sculptured, face Olympian-fair,
Asking of furrowed brow and shrunken lips,
"Is *this* the face that launched a thousand ships?"

I. SUTHERLAND GROOM.

SURRENDER

WITHOUT disguise . . .
Without weapons . . .
Without flesh . . .
Is surrender,
Is what music is.
Flowing and low,
Flowing and clear.
Lighter,
Still lighter,
Farther,
Still farther,
Outside of Man,
Outside of Mind,
Outside of Body.
Low and calm . . .
Pure and clear . . .
Without disguise . . .
Without weapons . . .
Without flesh . . .
Is what calmness is ;
Is what music is.
The flight of the flesh
To surrender . . .
Not to fight !
To be free,
To stretch out
In Time . . .
That is pure,
That is still.
The soul, free
To devour its universe.
Passage of Time ?
There is no Time.
Therefore . . . no haste,
Therefore . . . no waste.
Without disguise . . .
Without weapons . . .
Without flesh . . .
Is submission,
Is what music is.
Is life . . . with peace !
To fight . . . to be sad ?
O Christ !
Carve me a world,
Not insidious . . .
Not strong . . .
But calm and still as snow.
Peopled with minds
Fixed on surrender,
Not ashamed !
What of covered stirrings ?
Of sentimental ooze ?
Tear off their blinkers, God,
They are blind to
Surrender . . .
Calmness . . .
They are afraid of the pure
snow,
Of the small child,
Of the sky !
Open the heavens !
Carve them a world
Out of the greenness of the
earth,
Out of the dark light of Night.

Without disguise . . .
Without weapons . . .
Without flesh . . .
Is the new world,
Is surrender,
Is what music is.
Will Christ carve it ?
Or Abdubahah ?
Hear it not in shouting,
Nor yelling,
Nor screaming over world
Hook-ups.
But, from mouth to mouth,
Mind to mind,
Each unto eachness,
Life in life . . .
Is surrender,
Is what music is,
Is what God is,
Is what a small child is,
Is the dark light of Night,
Is what the pure snow is . . .
Patient repetitions
Of surrender . . .
Of what music is . . .
Bigness is smallness,

Smallness never bigness!
Surrender
To the whole . . .
Is what life is,
Is what the new world will be,
Each unto eachness . . .
Becoming what music is . . .
In the new world . . .
For you are Christ!

Outside of Man,
Outside of Mind,
Outside of Body,
Low and calm . . .
Pure and clear . . .

JOAN IMIG.

ON THE SHORES OF LOCH EARN

COMPLETED AFTER THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

THE hills are heather-flushed and full of strength,
Old in wisdom and the mind of God,
The knowledge of His love a million years,
And all the mighty working of His brain.
And in the crooked hollow of the hills—
Warm in the sun, and purple to the brink,
The mountain heather dips into the lake
And plunges down into the sky again.

For here am I come hither from the world—
From sickening wars that cannot stop their shrieking,
And all the bitter consciousness of sin,
To gaze upon a life that might have been.
And I have come to lose the weight of things
In the endlessness of hills, and in the depths
Of these unbroken waters, I am here
As one who has been dead, to live again
In freedom and the nature of the hills,
To learn the water-wisdom, and assume
The calm unruffled glory of the sky.
And oh, that I were ever lying here
To grow at last into a part of it—
A sprig of quiet heather, or the dew,
Or even just a whisper in the wind. . . .

But I am grown more sensible at length,
And laught till God is laughing loudly with me
And all the hills are laughing through the heather . . .
For I was rash, and God was understanding,
And sent me out to multiply our mirth
Among the desolation of the world.

RACHEL E. BOULTON.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY : LXXXI

The younger poets who are honoured by appearing in Yale's Series of Younger Poets are a fortunate group. *Letter to a Comrade* by Joy Davidman is foreworded by Stephen Vincent Benet. He speaks in his appreciative review of genuine power to be found in this first book of verse.

Dwelling on her youth and the interesting fact that she belongs to a generation that knew the Depression, in its teens, the War not at all, and is just not articulate, Benet dwells on the plenty of indignation here but not a willingness to accept frustration. And, quotes in part " Prayer against Indifference "—

> When wars and ruined men shall cease
> To vex my body's house of peace,
> And bloody children lying dead
> Let me lie softly in my bed
> To nurse a whole and sacred skin,
> Break roof and let the bomb come in.
>
> Knock music at the templed skull
> And say the world is beautiful,
> But never let the dweller lock
> Its house against another knock ;
> Never shut out the gun, the scream,
> Never lie blind within a dream.

And what does Miss Davidman say herself of the art she is so well serving ?—

> " To my mind poetry is a combination of words and music whose function is with passionate intensity to express for all men the emotions of all men. The poetry of to-day, consequently, cannot afford to ignore to-day's social problems, for it is the social struggle alone which provokes intense passion in our century ; nor can the modern poet afford to be esoteric. If detachment in a poet makes for sterility, so do intellectual intricacy and intellectual snobbishness. I believe, therefore, that the contemporary poet must throw himself into the class struggle, must write of the workers and for them, since on their side alone is noble aspiration to be found ; and this is increasingly the purpose of my own work."

Courageously this poet writes " To the Virgins "—

> Whatever arrow pierce the side
> Or what confusion wring the mind,
> Cherish the silver grin of pride
> To stiffen your mouth in a whistling wind.
>
> Love will devise you tricks of pain
> Like fires, and gentleness a curse ;
> Never transcend the armoured brain,
> Never let in the universe.

A French title to a very human and delightful poem, " Il Pleure Dans Mon Doleur "—

How shall I keep the rain from my eyes ;
how shall I walk discreetly in the sky,
keep my feet safe and keep my honour dry,
how shall I flourish comforted and wise ;

who will guard me from the slow rain coming down
dappling the air with light ;
who will keep the rain from my sight
and who will shut my door that I may not drown

overtaken by the soft flood of the rain
that fingers patiently the eyes and hair,
and when shall I no longer stare
at a starred melancholy windowpane. . . .

Only turn your lips to my lips and let your hair
lie in my hand or tangle in my hand,
and fall asleep, and let your body stand
between my sorrow and the weeping air.

Youth, so well educated with so lively a temperament and the gift of song, is a delight. Casting a glance at coming years, Miss Davidman gives " Yet One More Spring ", of which we quote the first stanza :

What will come of me
After the fern has feathered from my brain
And the rosetree out of my blood ; what will come of me
In the end, under the rainy locustblossom
Shaking its honey out on springtime air
Under the wind, under the stooping sky ?
What will come of me and shall I lie
Voiceless forever in earth and unremembered,
And be forever the cold green blood of flowers
And speak forever with the tongue of grass
Unsyllabled, and sound no louder
Than the slow falling downward of white water,
And only speak the quickened sandgrain stirring,
Only the whisper of the leaf unfolding,
Only the tongue of leaves forever and ever ?

A slim first volume of poetry by M. M. Valle of Lima, Peru, *Notes (Private)*, (The Rumford Press, Concord, N.H.) who was long enough in America to have this record of his ardent appreciation and experience collected and published here, has many angles of interest. First and foremost the type is splendid, not the small letters and much paper that is advocated by many. The brevity also recommends it. Mr.

Valle's picture adds to the interest. He states that the book is privately printed. I am confident it will be publicly enjoyed. Such titles as the following carry the poems: "A Feeling," "Another Feeling," "Hope," "Leaves," "Suffer Alone," and "An Encomium." Let us begin with the first poem, a clarion call.

I am sick :
Sick and tired.
Sick of effeminate manhood,
Of untrue manners,
Tired of rest, of wasting time.
It's all the same.
They're all the same.
Tired of rambling on a road, called happy
And picked at random.
Why? Where? When?
Alas! No! Not! I
Awake to the blood of your adventurous forefathers!

In a letter to me Mr. Valle writes :

"The material which goes to make up this book was written over a period of years and with no thought of publication. It was an outlet and a great consolation, this effort to analyse and jot down the emotions of life. The publication was made with the intention of helping young people in their struggle toward maturity, by revealing to them honestly, how someone else had evolved."

An interesting letter from Ignace M. Ingianni, author of *Songs of Earth* (Wings Press), arriving in answer to my letter of inquiry follows :

"Your inquiries about poetry, why I write it and what part I think it plays in the welter of to-day, put me on the proverbial spot. I don't know why I write poetry. Lines begin ringing through my head, an uncontrollable emotion clutches at my throat, and I must write what I feel. This feeling brushes every other thing aside, but I am at a loss to know how it arises, unless it be from the very spring of life and the fountain of experience. I believe it is inborn, like the possession of a natural aptitude for mathematics. I can say that art and life are inevitably bound up with each other, and poetry finds its place in our metallized civilization."

Oft-times the place of a man's birth is reflected later on in his work. Mr. Ingianni is a native of Sicily which he left in early childhood. But the sunlight and the colour has lingered in the background of his mind to serve him when poetry calls. Persuasive are these lyrics and the picture enjoyed by the poet is given the reader. Who has not followed the sea-gull? Perhaps it is the suggestion of nearing port that

makes the appearance of this happy, clamouring bird precious to us all:

Wheeling, swooping, vagrant thing,
Sliding on the sky,
Give my silent thoughts your wing,
Let them soar and fly.

Let them shine upon the air,
Sing a pagan tune,
Mount the wind, and with a flare
Travel to the moon.

Just a moment's beating wing,
Carving word and rhyme,
With a swerving restless swing
Clinging on through time.

Charming I find "Our Love":

The broken gate is sagging
Upon our crumbled wall,
My words like leaves that scatter
Are hollow where they fall.

The human heart has seasons,
Its April comes and goes,
And on the heels of Autumn
Come hurrying down the snows.

Our flaming eyes are dimming,
We speak no idle word,
And silence is the music
By which we two are stirred.

Twilight will claim our promise
With every passing day
But braver years of fragrance
Cannot be brushed away.

No one can steal the essence,
The heart's intrinsic fire,
It may dissolve at twilight
To rise with dawn's desire.

The war of the emotions we must all bravely meet,—may it be the only war! There are good sonnets also in this volume and we choose the one celebrating Anna Pavlowa:

How can the living flame be ever spent
Although the passing life be but a spark ?
Your whirling limbs shall leap from out the dark,
When sheen and tulle and powdered wings are rent,
Blown through the air into the cosmic dance.
Lost in the blossoms of an almond tree
A snow-white speck shall flit so joyously
As though enraptured by a nectared trance.

Within the darkened halls of shifting space
We slip as sand from timeless crests of dunes,
No power can rest the flowing streams, no moons
Can lure the ebbing tide to slow its pace.
Yet how can we believe that you are gone
When still each pond reveals its dreaming swan ?

Mary Morris Duane, until *Star-Drift* (Chapman, Grimes ; Boston, Mass.), has been known through charming lyrics for children and barnyard ditties. The cordiality of her public, she writes us, is the reason for her venturing into wider fields. She is among the many poets who write because they cannot help it. The poems come to Mrs. Duane in their own rhythms and often at most inconvenient hours. I hear she has them singing in her head. A poem to Amelia Earheart entitled " The Flight " follows :

Through mud all thick upon the field
Her plane mounts to the sky ;
Away upon her lonely flight
To gulls' wild, haunting cry :
Through clouds that thicken all about
She steers into the night,
She cannot see beneath her plane
A ship's dim-moving light.
The goal is ever on and on
To beat of rhythmic bar ;
Above a floating bank of fog
There hangs an evening star.
Oh, soul on swift, adventuring wing
Of age that is to be,
We fly with you on wings of thought
Across that lonely sea.

A shorter lyric, which seems to associate itself with the tribute to Miss Earhart, entitled " The Tide " :

I know that I shall hear the beat
Of surf on driven sand
When flowing down appointed ways
Life's river leaves the land.

The meadows widen to the marsh,
White wings will thicker be
As salt the tide comes flooding in
From death's unfathomed sea.

Wings at Dusk, by Eugene Edmund Murphey, M.D. (Longmans, Green and Co., N.Y.), a first book of poems, carries an interesting prefatory note by William Lyon Phelps. He speaks of the eminence attained in literature by physicians. Dr. Murphey writes me an interesting paragraph in regard to his taking to poetry :

> " I have written primarily for my own satisfaction and in the hope that I might give some pleasure to a group of friends scattered throughout the country, who have shown some interest in my fugitive verses. My feeling about the matter is this : That every one of us, assuming that we are mature individuals, are what we are because of the emotions which we have experienced. That our emotions become a part of our spiritual pattern and that if we can imprison them in the written word we can the better understand ourselves and be the more intelligible to our friends. And by emotion I mean any definite and clear cut sensuous experience—whether it be the beauty of marsh and beach and sunlit water, the pattern of bird-flight against a windy sky, some biologic urge, the kindly face of a friend, or some poignant moment which lies in that dim borderland midway between laughter and tears and yet which holds so much of each. And there is an added reason. The belief that words are *things* and that many of them are ill-treated—some beautiful old words in danger of death and dissolution, some good and robust ones scuffed and battered and in need of rescue. Is it not conceivably a desirable thing to save a word for posterity ? And of what use is poetry in the world to-day ? Perhaps it may give detachment to those who need it sadly, it may even evoke the thought that there are other standards than those of the mart, the counting house and the forum, but most of all it serves as a universal medium in which those who have lived and felt and dreamed may find expression."

The writer of many reviews, I am also a reader of a number, and it is with irritation I find so much of the reviewer and so little of the poet reviewed. For this reason I use another formula. I hope there are others of my point of view. I like not the surgeon's knife when dealing with a poem so good in its entirety.

The poem that opens this interesting book from an obviously interesting man, follows :

Walking at twilight through the claustral pines
I glimpsed far down the path a flash of wings—
Great wings, too distant and too dim to name
Presaging death to some small woodland thing.

I have known Death for many weary years :
Three times he came and peered into my face,
Each time I said " Old man, not yet, not yet."
I have fought Death through many weary nights
Striving with all I had of heart or brain
To bar him from the threshold of a friend ;
But barred, He only waited for the time
When neither love nor leech-craft could avail.
But worst of all it is to see him come
In unrelenting slow processional
The while his conscious cowering victim waits
Like one who listens for the hangman's tread.
So, now, it is my prayer for those I love
That He may come as might some monstrous bird
Sudden and swift and sure—a flash of wings
Against the dusk. Then stillness and the night.

Prominent in the group of Minnesota poets, Marianne Clarke's *Sunlit Trails* (Poets Press, New York, N.Y.) will be eagerly read. In the table of contents, following the title of each poem in parenthesis, we find its form given, and as we glance down the pages this writer is an experienced craftsman in the art of many forms of poetry. Not one seems absent in this talented list.

Miss Clarke sends us a very acceptable consideration of poetry as here given : Poetry gives nature's historical record of life in common : telling feeling and growing knowledge expressed in fitting words. To write true poetry means to picture the world, at large, to reach the universe with the interpretation of both old and new ideas—plus originality. Poetry is the illuminated translation of the colourful fountain of thought, singing to the world : a touch of rhythmic unity combined with hidden understanding brought to light by the concentrated power of far-reaching and eternal relativity. True poetry is that which has inborn, God Given, heights and depths—open to mutual good. Prose enumerates seeds of realism, while Poetry assimilates the bloom of the flowering rose—the garden of a roseate heart.

In an eight-line trimeter this poet has captured " Wishes Of The Hour " :

As gardens reach perfection
With sunset's amber light,
Beside the nearby waters
In calm and restful sight,
Their call of gleaming beauty
Attunes responsive peace,
A grand, harmonious message
For drastic war to cease.

The author of *Flame Against the Wind*, (The Wings Press, N.Y.), Florence Wilson Roper, was the winner of the Kaleidograph Book Award a short time ago. From this collection we have chosen one of her well-done sonnets, entitled " The Rivals " :

In grey Westminster Abbey, side by side,
They sleep, the virgin queen, Elizabeth,
And Mary, twice a queen and thrice a bride,
Alike submissive in the arms of death.
How still they lie, two effigies in stone,
That once were splendid rivals rich in hate,
Warm in the flesh and throbbing at the bone,
Their jewelled fingers ruling Church and State.

With dim prophetic vision I can see
The lichened stones that make these ancient walls
Crumbled to dust and lost to memory,
The queens forgotten where the lizard crawls.
O time, O death, what dream of high estate
But that your dusty hands obliterate !

This writer says of poetry : " It has been to me the most soul-satisfying of all adventures—a beautiful escape into a far country. ' It blesses him who gives and him who takes.' "

The following lyric reminds one how precious, in the too sunny days of sunny climes, is the dark : " But For The Dark "—

Fresh as a rose at dawn and sweet with musk,
Swift to its close the day goes winging by !
What of that hour when cool grey-fingered dusk
Has lighted her pale tapers in the sky ?

But for the dark our eyes would never dream
Of stars that jewel the deep breast of night ;
But for the dark the moon would never gleam
Above the world in calm ethereal light.

An Amherst Garden, (Dorrance and Co., Phila., Pa.) is the sixth book of Edna Davis Romig's to appear in eight years. Among her admired volumes are : *Lincoln Remembers*, *Marse Lee*, *Blue Hills*, *Torch Undimmed*, etc. There is charm in the lyrics we find here, as illustrated in the following :

I felt the sure location
Of beauty, and the place
Whence rapture springs in moments
Of singular grace ;
It was quite too impalpable
And exquisite to name,
But on its tongue was eloquence
And on its head a flame.

Do not require of Pentecost
That it be classified.
Enough that it has happened once—
Nor ask that it abide.

Touching on to-day we read :

I saw the clouds come down and veil.
Familiar house and garden trees
And level off the little hill,
Then sudden elevating these
Enact the role of centuries
Surmising change, decide to will
Aristocracies, Democracies,
Then tiring of abyss and prism
Choose Communism,
Here lopped a limb, there falls a head—
Another System shed.

Mrs. Romig's home is in Colorado ; she has occupied the position of Associate Professor of English at the University of Colorado.

In writing Margarete Rose Akin for a comment on poetry to include in consideration of *Life's Afterglow* (William T. Todd, Dallas, Texas), she sends the following :

" Arthur Simons says of Robert Bridges' verse : 'It is a kind of essence ; it is what is imperishable in perfume ; it is what is nearest in words to silence.' "

Mrs. Akin has set for herself a truly romantic task. This is the year of her Golden Wedding Anniversary and she has promised that she will celebrate that occasion with *fifty golden sonnets*. Mrs. Akin is a Texan and we are receiving more and more poetry from that Lone Star State.

The following gives us an idea of " Marsh Fires at Night " in South-east Texas :

Nor brush, nor pen, nor tongue has power to blend
Or catch the scene where smoke and lurid flames
From marsh grass, dry and tall, on fire, ascend
And roll and churn and play Inferno's games.

Mrs. Akin occasionally turns to the free line and successfully, in the following : " Flower Fountain."

I drank from a full fountain
of colours, finely spraying
from golden-rod hearts :
Still finger Ageratum
poured lavender tears
for my fever-thirst—
But, O—Pink Radiance chalices

brimmed for my famished soul,
and who shall forbid me
when I drink the cooling draught
Though it is held in a vase—
a sacrament urn.

In approaching the last book of Frederick Mortimer Clapp, *Said Before Sunset*, (Harper and Bros., New York and London), it behoves us to know something of this poet who has won honours galore: A.B.s, and B.A.s, in art and science. What shall we say? We easily say, Mr. Clapp is the author of: *New Poems*, *On the Overland and Other Poems*, *New York and Other Verses*, *Joshua Trees*, *Les Dessins De Pontormo*, *Jacopo Carucci: His Life and Works*, *History of the Seventeenth Aero Squadron*.

We turn into this book, which is well printed and intriguing to the sixty-eighth page, where we find "The Sonnet":

This parterre was created for a hand
that likes a strict task and, having no taste for more
scope than it gives, sets an instinctive store
on delicately deliberate contours and
clean symmetry. For in this deftly-planned,
this close-clipped pattern, something of the lore
lives of old gardens where curbed smooth waters pour
all but inaudible into silence, and a neat band
of bedded iris running round a space
of grass and shadow makes a half-haunted place
to linger in and watch the twilight creep
lengthening down dense hedges, until suddenly
under the walled enchantment seethe deep
uncapturable rhythms of the sea.

The carrying over of line into line, and the intellectual grasp of this poem greatly appeal to this reviewer.

Perhaps we are not surprised that the genius of his mind writes the following: "The Dead":

I see them go filing stolidly away,
one after another, their inner loneliness sifted
to the ashes of a reticence older than life,
their eyes fixed on their night.

Over treeless rock-hills thrust up through blowing dust
they creep along the boulder-choked washes of their hopes
in the grey places beyond eye and ear;
they poke their way through clefts in the dead years.

Husk-like they who were once so heavy with love,
they file farther and farther away, until they seem,
low down against the horizon of memory,
too minute to have lived, too still to have ever moved.

That in so measuring a mind we are also not surprised to find a poem entitled " The Marble Club " :

These are the windows of the played-out men.
The eye-like buds of Spring on captive trees
that guard their marble club look in and see them there
snow-white of hair, each sunk in his cushioned chair,
under a coffered ceiling's hint of gilt.

The vague light of senescent chandeliers
glows on their waxen ease.
There are no fears, no hopes, to prod the played-out men
who made their killings in big booms gone by.
Faces of furrowed ashes they sit and snoozle
motionless and old and cold,
each perched on an invisible pyramid
of power or gold.

The ports, the rivers, strangle with silt
dragged down from humbled mountains by their schemes.
Rails rust, cogs bind, grim chimneys tilt
and crumble. These are the played-out men
who played fast once and won,
who slew the inner advent of their dreams
and blocked with bonds the sudden gate of fate.

In waxen ease they snoozle, early, late,
propped up in front of unread pages
stuffed with the market's somersaults and rages,
They do not even seem to notice now
how life, the wriggling eyeless grub,
squirms out of subway exits and across
the very sidewalks of their marble club.

A word—I take it from my first book *Road Royal:* or, rather, a phrase—this *lavishment* of writing. Recently at a poetry meeting, in a very handsome home, of women poets, I heard a flattering exchange of compliments and the chairman, catching sight of me, asked me to say something. And, because it is our right to always betray ourselves, I commented upon the satisfaction they all seemed to be enjoying which found small evidence in financial return and, I suggested that, among ourselves, being dealers in words we enjoy a certain excellence but what does the little girl on the eastside know " of night's starry architrave " ? This from a sonnet of mine recently published in the *New York Times*. Until we who practise poetry love it enough to make it simple enough for all to enjoy, how may we expect financial return or in the last analysis the return of fame ?

All in One Breath, a book of fifty lyrics, (MacMillan Co., N.Y.), the eleventh collection of poetry presented by David Morton, sustains and carries forward the sensitive phrasing filled with beauty of this writer. Well-known and beloved at home, when known will be beloved abroad. Here is no attitudinizing or straining for the elaborate. As the title suggests, writing of poetry to David Morton is as necessary, and as wholesome and as free as the act of breathing. Found in the following: "Lyric":

All in one breath,
Like the Word the Lord saith. . . .
The sky and the flower,
The hawk and the dove,
And Time and the hour,
And Love . . . and Love,
Like the Word the Lord saith. . . .
All in one breath.

Short but telling, we find the poems on each page. "Personal Goods":

Search through the leafy boughs of thought
To find the individual bird
Whose ministrelsy, when she is caught,
Is music that was never heard
In any other land or tree
That gave a varied choir to fame—
Your own inviolate melody
That is its own essential name.

In celebration of Autumn, David Morton writes: "Beyond Glory":

Now it is asters on the lawn,
Where the roses were, before. . . .
Who would have thought, with summer gone,
And brown waste spreading round the door,
That there would be this late return
To regions of abandoned glory,
And this grave way that asters burn
Like stars above the ended story?

We turn to the invaluable evaluation of poets to be found in Edwin Markham's anthology, *The Book of Poetry*. Edwin Markham says of two of Morton's books: "They contain some of the best sonnets of contemporary authorship. David Morton is not only a poet but a distinct American influence in poetry."

Melville Cane, in *Poems New and Selected* (Harcourt, Brace and Co.), is following an excellent precedent. Earlier works of Mr. Cane being now out of print, he has gathered from these earlier books poems he wishes to preserve, adding thirty-eight poems which never before

appeared in book form. Born in Plattsburg, New York, educated at Columbia Grammar School, receiving his A.B. from Columbia, 1900, and L.L.B. in 1903, editing the literary monthly, writing lyrics for the 'varsity operetta, the light poem and the serious, Cane contributed to the *Century Magazine* as well as *Puck* and *Judge* and reporting on the *New York Evening Post*. All this good preparation for, after an interval of twenty years, resuming writing. The law had occupied Cane's attention in the interim.

Of Emily Dickenson, Mr. Cane writes the following:

Enclosed within a hedge
Of privet, doubts and nays,
A burning spinster paced
Her clipped New England days.

While pretty singers droned
A local, nasal hymn,
She raised a timeless voice;
It reached the spatial rim.

She never saw a moor,
She never saw the sea,
Yet from a hilltop in her heart
She scanned Infinity.

In the forefront of this book we have recent work. "Presence Of Snow" illustrates the genre of this poet:

So rare, so mere,
You cannot hear
It brush against the stillness or impair
With faintest stir
The poised, suspended air.

So rare, so mere,
And yet imponderably clear;
You cannot see, yet see
The secret flow
Of imminent snow,
Although
The softest breath has yet to free,
The gentlest current yet to take
The first bewildered flake.

Mr. Cane writes of poetry:

"Two reasons why I write poetry are these: I enjoy the sound and shape of words and am moved to arrange them in melodic sequences. And furthermore—and perhaps primarily—I am interested in seeking to capture and crystallize experiences that abide permanently in the heart of man."

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW

DEAR SIR,—In reference to the two quotations from Hopkins' poems made by Mr. J. A. Chapman in his letter in the September number, I should like to point out that in the first the phrase " world without event " is far more metaphysical than Miltonic. The sort of surprise given by the substitution of " event " for " end " is just what the metaphysicals, as opposed to Milton, would have been likely to countenance, as anyone familiar with their respective ways of thinking and feeling must agree.

The second quotation seems more Miltonic but is betrayed by " their sweating selves," which is closer, I think, to Crawshaw (who had a special fondness for the word " sweat ") than to Milton who would hardly have brought in such realistic detail in a similar context.

Hopkins, of course, was a very close student of Milton ; but so he was of Herbert. There is no law that artists should resemble their masters, or that they should not resemble other artists of whom they never may have heard. Since, however, I have already gone into the question of his literary ancestry at some length in the July and August numbers of *Poetry* (Chicago), I cannot here do so again.

Finally, it is incorrect to state that Donne " was as a nobody to Tennyson and Browning and their fellows." The Victorians in general disliked or ignored him, and Hopkins may never have read him ; but Browning knew Donne's poetry thoroughly before 1842; there were five different texts in his library, and before his sixteenth birthday he had set to music " Go and catch a falling star." That the earlier romantics were not quite so ignorant of Donne as we generally suppose can be gathered from a paper by A. H. Nethercot called *The Reputation of the Metaphysical Poets during the Age of Johnson and the Romantic Revival* in *Studies in Philology*, 1925.

Yours, etc.,

Arundel TERENCE HEYWOOD.

A prize presented at the New York Fair, through Miss Anita Browne's Poetry Week group, went to Howard Wright, a West Point Cadet, for his poem " Meditation." We give the first stanza :

I wonder what lies beyond,
Over the purple hill, where the sun is shining ?
Here, where the shadows pick up their skirts
And run, and hide, in pools of velvet blackness
Is nothing.
And if I should find the light and the green fields
over the hill,
Then I shall fill the emptiness of my heart,
So draw close to me, Brother Death,
Wrap your cold arms around me, and show me the path
Over the hill, to eternity.

ANTHOLOGIES AT WAR

We find in Mr. Geoffrey Grigson's Preface to *New Verse* (Faber) a delightful recipe for the making of modern poetry: science (in scraps), Freudian theory (in scraps), marxist thought (in scraps) and the political and economic situation in the world. Though he calls this a criterion, it is clear—and what a relief to find some clarification at last!—that the amalgam really provides the ground-work for all the productions of the particular school represented in this anthology. Science, Freudian theory, Marxist thought—quite a new basis for the divine art of poetry. Certainly it is evident that the anatomical school of verse-writers (happily Mr. Grigson has called the collection " New Verse " not " New Poetry ") have derived almost all their ideas from Freud and Marx, with the result that their writings are overloaded with physical, mainly sexual, imagery and thought, and political speculation. But although now at last Mr. Grigson has made the derivation clear, the ultimate mystery of this malignant growth on the body of literature still remains dark. It is an unprecedented irruption, productive only of disruption and decay. In every poem, almost without exception, there is, to quote an inimitable phrase from Stella Gibbons's prize-novel *Cold Comfort Farm*, " something nasty in the wood-shed." Fortunately, most of the writers here represented are very young, and all, with the exception of three, are under forty. The portrait gallery at the end of the book is markedly undergraduate. So there is hope. No doubt many of them will grow out of an immature preoccupation with nastiness.

In any case, there could be little hope of satisfaction in an anthology prefaced with the untrue statement that " both an epic and a limerick are poems," the difference being not of kind but of degree. The difference is first and last of kind, not of degree at all. An epic is poetry, a limerick is verse. And obviously, the poets and critics who inveigh against what Mr. Grigson calls " poetic inflation "—his way of referring to inspiration—have no knowledge of the experience which is the only basis for genuine poetry.

However, too much attention has already been given to the untenable claims of the anatomical school of " good reporters " (Mr. Auden's demand) preoccupied with " objects and events " (Mr. Grigson's requirement). Theirs is not poetry—even on their own showing (" don't confuse the kinds of poetry," says Mr. Grigson) but topical verse, and it will find its own level. But an exception must be made of the work of Bernard Spencer and Kenneth Allott, who are both genuine poets, of keen sensibility. Their work plainly declares what the perceptive reader and critic inevitably knows: that the manner, not the matter, is the final test of " poetry." Mr. Spencer uses physical imagery freely, his diction is modernistic, and the result, because of the " passion and the life " behind the commonplace words, not verse, but poetry. " Cold Night " is a good example.

It is a pleasure to turn to so vivid a contrast: Mr. Robert Lynd's *Anthology of Modern Poetry* (Nelson, 7s. 6d.), although the total effect

of this book is not so satisfying as it might be. There tends to be much hyper-English "heartiness," many invocations to England and the English countryside, as for example in Mr. Belloc's poems. The poets represented are unexceptionably good, and Mr. Lynd's liberal-minded approach, his refusal to exclude any poet "because his school appeals to me less strongly than others" wholly admirable, but it does seem that not always the best work of the poets has been chosen. Housman shines out, W. H. Davies, Robert Nichols, the lovely poem by Maurice Baring, "Diffugere Nives" among many other beautiful things, and it is a joy to find a "devotional" poem which so nobly and sweetly transcends the conventional meaning of that word: Evelyn Underhill's "Immanence." More space might have been given to one of the greatest of modern English poets, D. H. Lawrence, who has gained fame, even notoriety, for the more obviously striking, but less finally important, elements in his work. With him, as with every writer who is also a poet, the true man is revealed in the poetry, and it is therefore to the poetry we should look for any final understanding of the over-discussed and greatly misunderstood Lawrence. Mr. Lynd's anthology is catholic and sane and serves an excellent purpose; yet despite its many treasures, is it really representative of English poetry "written by men and women who were still alive when King George V came to the throne"?

In conclusion, a quotation from Stopford Brooke is apposite:

> The needs of poetry—great matter, lovely manner; thought and feeling; observation of the outward, contemplation of the inward, world; passion knit fast to truth.

Not until we recognise once more the eternal truths, the unchanging laws governing life and art, and return to a realization of the need for great poetry, can there be any hope for our derelict civilization. So long as poets are content to represent, never to transcend, their age, the age remains spiritually barren. The responsibility of the poets is heavy, since, as Shelley knew well, they are "the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

DALLAS KENMARE.

A beautiful book in content and format is Gwynneth M. Fergusson's *Rune of the Gate of Heaven*. Handsomely printed and bound and exquisitely illustrated, this collection of poems reveals a tender sensibility, a cultured mind and a skilful use of verse forms, rhythms and rhymes. Deep religious feeling is never sanctimonious or trite—so individual and happy, indeed, that many of the poems have a fervent sublimity found only in the best and most original hymns and several carols would beautify the most eclectic collection. Delightful ballad form is given to several legends, and a number of poems inspired by the last war have a poignant aptness now. A less ornate and inexpensive setting and a few omissions with a little editing would have made this generous collection more compact and homogenous and available to many who would find consolation, inspiration and loveliness therein.

At this time more than ever it is a rare and heartening experience to come across two volumes of verse in which the poets have not to assume the rose-coloured spectacles of " escapism " in order to cure an El Greco astigmatism. As Charles Hanson Towne says in his introduction to *Columbia Poetry* 1939 (Columbia University Press, 5s.) an anthology of Columbia students' verse :

> What strikes one particularly is that they are not afraid. These poets live in no ivory tower remote and serene from the field of action. They are aware of the living present and all it may hold of pain and purpose.

Sometimes the source of their inspiration is the unchangeable beauty of the world, winter being called " the vast angel," but mostly they write of radios, ambulances, ice-cream parlours, wars in Spain, firing each subject with the traditional hope of the young that for so long has been in danger of extinction in the rising flood of disillusionment and cynicism.

It is this same belief in the world, this courage to express that belief in her own way, free from any obvious influence, that inspires the *Poems* of Anne Ridler (Oxford University Press, 5s.). Although, as Anne Bradby, she edited for the World's Classics the second volume of Shakespeare Criticism, these poems are her first collected verse. They show a mind as delicate and finely-balanced as a compass-needle, swinging from one sharp visual image to another, and invariably coming to rest at the magnetic meridian of love. This is an attractive procedure at first, but its constant repetition through various forms makes monotonous reading, and leads one to suppose that, unlike the Columbia anthology, the courage of her poetry is dependent upon the love of, one infers, her husband, and is incapable of being divorced from that love, as in the last verse of " Bunhill Fields " :

> For our faith is one which may
> convert but not console :
> we shall not, except by our own will,
> part for ever in the gape of hell.

It will be interesting to see how far this supposition is correct, as her work develops.

Helen Lanyon's lyrics in *Marionettes and Other Verses* (Baird, Belfast) are distinctive for their sensitiveness and restraint, which make personal sorrow and consolation very shareable. This is one of the true tests of poetry. Bereavement is one of her dominant themes in this small book and it is approached from many angles with a quiet insistence but no morbid self pity. " Appeasement " has a rare pathos, where sorrow is likened to a sleeping child held close ; it continues :

> But the careless and the kind
> Come and loose its swathing bands :
> And it wakens, chill and blind,
> Beating me with angry hands.

Then I hold it very close,
And, with lips against my breast
It drains my heart's best blood, God knows,
Ere it sinks again to rest.

while " Age " has an equally rare sense of achievement :

I have not any grief
(So I've been thinking)
For the falling of the leaf
For the falter of the tune
For the fading of the afternoon
Or the flame's shrinking.

Lovely beyond belief
Are the bare boughs of the trees,
The silence sweet and profound
Following melodious sound,
The twilight's mysteries,
And the deep steadfast glow
Of a fire that is burning low.

The charming cover design is by Mrs. Hacker, known to readers of THE POETRY REVIEW as Carla Lanyon Lanyon.

The legend of St. Cuthman is admirably told in a verse and prose drama by Christopher Fry under the title of *The Boy with a Cart* (Humphrey Milford, O.U.P., 1s. 6d.). It has the virtue of being full of humour as well as poetry, for the idiom is often whimsical and even racy, particularly when the old mother speaks her mind about the bumpings she gets in the handcart. The miracle of the rain falling on the hay of the mocking mowers happens at Steyning, and there Cuthman is said to have built the church, helped by a new miracle :

I was alone by the unattended pillar,
Mourning the bereaved air that lay so quiet
Between walls ; hungry for hammer-blows
And the momentous hive that once was there.
And when I prayed my voice slid to the ground
Like a crashed pediment.
There was a demolition written over
The walls, and dogs rummaged in the foundations,
And picnic parties laughed on a heap of stone.
But gradually I was aware of some one in
The doorway and turned my eyes that way and saw
Carved out of the sunlight a man who stood
Watching me. . . .
He asked me why I stood alone. . . .
I told him : It is the king-post.

He stretched his hand upon it. At his touch
It lifted to its place. There was no sound.
I cried out, and I cried at last " Who are you " ?
I heard him say " I was a carpenter ". . . .

Arthur Row pays passionate tribute, in the grand rhetorical manner, to the stage celebrities of Irving's time. The Lyceum was a temple of art in those days, and he mourns its decline and fall also in *The Royal Lyceum Theatre and Other Stage Poems* (1s. 2d. post free). The sonnet on Henry Irving follows :

Before such art and wondrous acts as thine
The pageant of the stately years stands still,
Whilst Fate's gold goblet, Fate alone can fill,
Vaunts high its gleaming brim with Truth's deep wine,
We pause and see again the crystal shine,
As each of those rare gems from out thy will,
Makes passage into being—climbs the hill :
Uprisen children of a soul divine,
We glimpse in many visions long since gone
The dour crime-haunted man reap crime's reward,
See Becket give his life unto his Lord,
Hear Charles speak forth that long-remembered word,
And when the nobler mantle thou didst don
How in the Jew the grand resentment shone.

An English verse translation of a French, German, Italian, or Spanish song, it so happening, may read either the nearest you can conceive to an original English poem, or the farthest from one. In either case what is more probable than that it send the reader to the song in the original language, so that it were an improvement on men's present practice that a volume like Mr. C. Fillingham Coxwell's *German Poetry, translated into English in the original metres* (C. W. Daniel Co., 8s. 6d.) should be provided with an index to the first lines of the French, German, or whatever language it is. A strong interest aroused in me by the perusal of Mr. Coxwell's volume drove me to the German originals, and I hesitate to reveal how long it took me to find, in a two-volume *Goethes Gedichte* (six hundred pages), the seventeen songs to be found in it. To give all the first lines would occupy more space than can be afforded here, but I may give a few : as :

Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühn ?
Über allen Gipfeln Ist Ruh.
Dem Schnee, dem Regen, Dem Wind entgegen.
Edel sei der Mensch.
Wie herrlich leuchtet Mir die Natur !
Willst du immer weiter schweifen ?

Mr. Coxwell has added to the Goethe songs the Archangels' Song from the Prologue in Heaven in *Faust*. One is afraid it reads lamely

compared with other English versions, as the late Charles Russell's :

The sun his ancient peal is ringing
To brother-spheres that strive in song ;
On his appointed orbit swinging,
He rolls his thunder-path along.
Though none may know his deep foundation,
He strengthens angels as they gaze ;
Oh, high and wonderful Creation,
Sublime as on the first of days !

And the other three stanzas.

Mr. Coxwell has five poems of Stefan George, two of Rilke, not very striking, and one of Hugo von Hofmannstahl.

John Brophy's *Gentleman of Stratford* (Collins, 8s. 6d.) ranks with Helen Ashton's William and Dorothy as a vivid credible reconstruction of great personages, based on actual facts and fully documented, without being dull and pedantic. Mr. Brophy's Shakespeare is no lay figure, no wooden puppet but a completely human, reasonable, intelligent character, neither whitewashed nor degraded. We cannot imagine a better, more intimate and sensible biography of Shakespeare than this fascinating novel which deserves the blue riband of the highest critical rank, to win which, according to Shaw, " you must write the book of your generation on Shakespeare." The poet's restless homelife, his courtship, his escape to London, his contacts with dramatists and players and patrons, his persistent aloofness and integrity of character, the slow incubation of his plays, their development and performance as seen by Shakespeare himself are absorbingly, convincingly described, depriving the blackest blackout of its paralysing significance. A necessary book for all who wish to take Shakespeare out of the class-room and to realize the living man behind the stupendous achievement.

Another admirable example of the poet as novelist is Francis Brett Young's Johannesburg saga, *The City of Gold*, (Heinemann, 8s. 6d.), describing not only the colossal Rand mining struggles but the epic story of an Anglo-Boer family with their divided ambitions and loyalties. Full of action and incident, and notable for vivid characterization of Rhodes and Kruger and other protagonists in this titanic drama, the style remains quietly convincing and assured, with a remarkable explicitness and beauty of language and unobtrusive landscape painting of a great artist, a master of vision as well as words. I was not attracted by the theme but became fascinated by the humanity of the story and the splendour of the diction.

Mr. Thomas Burke has been *Living in Bloomsbury* (Allen and Unwin, 10s. 6d.) for more than one year's round and many seasons come under review in the consecutive Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter sections of these discursive memoirs of a genuine bookman, as mellow as the

adjacent squares before the ugly university buildings encroached on them. Mr. Burke, whom we remember as a poet thirty years ago, is old enough to appreciate the freedom, even licence, of Victorian days compared with the repressions and restrictions of these less spacious days. His comments are kindly and mature, but he concludes that "there is no curse, other than private or verbal, on our modern poets. They are doing very nicely. They no longer follow the stony path: they follow Samuel Smiles and help themselves to all the plural and quadruple jobs they can hear about. You will find some of them holding at once a comfortable office job, reading for a publisher, reviewing for four different papers, broadcasting talks and editing little quarterlies, leaving no chance to those who have no office job. Care and privation do not touch them. Life goes smoothly, too smoothly, perhaps and so drives them to write verse spluttering with the back-firing and brake-screeching of modern politics. . . . Debates and blue books and Reuter's cables are not good companions for poets. Consideration of the present discontents will give the poets less revelation, and therefore will make him of less value to mankind, than consideration of the sublime and permanent. Dismay and disgust made vocal, do nothing but spawn further disgust and dismay. They right no wrong."

News of Persephone (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 12s. 6d.) is the poetical title of a motor-car journey in Greece in search of the efflorescence of spring. Simply and genially Dorothy Una Ratcliffe describes her happy and successful quest. "Along the rocky shore at the foot of Acro-Nauplia I found comfrey, alexanders, wild radish, charlock, hemlock, cat's ear, wild mignonette, alyssum, bristling ox-tongue, and a pinx silene," proceeding to greet the jonquil hosts in the valley of Epidarus and the flowers of Parnassus above Arachova with quotations from the Homeric hymns, but the author's own muse remained tied to prose. After all, much of the classical scenery depicted, even Mount Parnassus itself, can be matched in Wharfedale.

With *Orchard's Bay* Mr. Alfred Noyes provides a garden book with a difference, not a God wot eruption of megalomaniac sentimentality but a deeper plumbing of the thoughts, observations and emotions set free by the contemplation of one of the loveliest spots on earth, a beautiful earthly garden that is the microcosm of the garden of the soul. Through almost thirty co-related essays, in which you can hear the actual voice of the poet, are scattered as many new lyrics, also authentic, artful as well as lovely, the fitting music of the theme elaborated by intricate devices of rhythm and rhyme so cunningly simple to heart and ear. "The Little Garden" of Assisi, where we should have met twice recently but for the intervention of political crises, is an exquisite chapter, and throughout the book Italy is not far removed from the Isle of Wight just as Mr. Noyes in his ramblings never stays far from

poetry. "A very large part of the poetry of the world has been given to this idealization of the past. It has nothing in common with the reactionary sentiment of the mere *laudator temporis acti*, and curiously enough it is often the most revolutionary and least conventional of the poets who have expressed it most poignantly. On the more personal side Swinburne in his *Forsaken Garden*, which was inspired by the garden of his old home at East Dene, two miles away from us, is as full of it as the greater poet of *In Memoriam* or as Stevenson in the epilogue to the *Child's Garden of Verses*. Byron, in those magnificent lamentations of *Childe Harold* over the lost splendours of Europe, touched a height that he never reached again." In the same essay Mr. Noyes insisted that " the beauty and wonder of poetry arise from the very fact which they seek to disregard—that it is an expression of something far deeper than the conscious mind can formulate. The poet's eye may be on a certain object but he sees far beyond it, and the object is only an excuse, a starting point, for the journey from earth to heaven. . . . One of the most striking and illuminating examples of the unconscious aim of this desiderium, this desire for a vanished forgotten home, is the great ode of Wordsworth on the Intimations of Immortality. The immediate occasion of it was a beautiful landscape in the Lake Country, but the poem does not remain there."

Mr. Noyes recognizes the precision of the observation of nature of two English poets in particular, even with birds, concerning which so many poets, copying one another in the cities, have made a poor showing. " Wordsworth and Tennyson are almost the only two to be trusted, Tennyson especially is as precise as any naturalist, and, in his sense of beauty and the laws of beauty, more exquisitely observant."

It is well to be reminded, too, by our poet-commentator that "much of the value and magic of poetry depend upon a time defying companionship and its quiet heightening of our own perceptions and sympathies. And there is no better test of true poetry than that it shall hold its own and even become more beautiful when read in the open air, on the hillside or by the sea, or in some quiet garden, where you can hear, as the vanished poet heard, 'the least bough's rustling.' There are few English poets who stand this test as well as Wordsworth."

While the title poem of *Homeland* (Favil Press, 3s. 6d.) is a call to patriotic service given to a land specially favoured by nature and by its own laws, most of the other poems in this attractively produced book by John W. Seccombe are concerned with birds and the countryside, either in the descriptive sense or in analogies of human philosophies, as in " Sanctuary." It is in a poem like this, of greater content, that his careful observation and recording of nature are most satisfying.

Title page and Index of this volume (30) will appear with the January 1940 issue.

AN APPRECIATIVE ROUND ROBIN

(To *The Editor*, THE POETRY REVIEW)

DEAR SIR,—We should be grateful if you could allow us a little space in which to express our concern at the state of poetry in this country to-day, and to set down what we consider the essential qualities of lasting poetry.

We believe that the three absolutely necessary qualities of poetry are beauty, form (auditory rhetoric and arrangement to suit subject), and deep-felt sincerity. By " beauty " it is wished to express a touch of the eternal, a glimpse of spiritual inspiration. This does not, of course, condemn the poetry of realism but does exclude the fatalistic, utterly pessimistic poetry which was so common around 1930.

We also believe that a poet should have absolute freedom in his choice of subject ; that he should not control or suppress his emotions ; and that he should be as simple as possible, because unnecessary complicity—which seems to be the aim of many contemporary poets—stifles depth of feeling.

It is our belief that poetry is a heritage of the whole British people and should not, therefore, be so surrounded by a fog of intellectualism that it is made incomprehensible to a large portion of the public. Poetry should not be a product of the intellect, but an expression of all those emotions and experiences which cannot find full expression in prose.

It is to be regretted that modern poetry is singularly poor in beauty of phrase and line ; each phrase, each word, is as important as the whole and the beauty of one should not be sacrificed for that of the other.

Finally, we believe that it is the duty of every lover of poetry to try to spread the appreciation of poetry throughout the country, and would therefore, like to add our humble congratulations to The Poetry Society on its pioneer work in Verse-Speaking, the greatest force in cultivating an appreciation of poetry amongst English-speaking peoples. It is to be hoped that there will soon be much more support in this field from the B.B.C., whose efforts in this direction have been anything but whole-hearted.

We are,
Yours faithfully,

ERIC CHETWYNDE, PETER A. D. BAKER,
ANTHONY STEWART WINK, D. E. SCOTT-ROBINSON.

CON HARVEY REPLIES TO MRS. ROSCOE

(To *The Editor*, THE POETRY REVIEW.)

SIR,—As Mrs. Theodora Roscoe has cited me in her letter, I feel constrained to challenge certain of her statements. In the blindness of her devotion to the cult of simplicity, which is, no doubt, the consequence of living in the country (I suppose Chalfont St. Peter might be described as that ?), she states that " an excellent test of the

genuineness of their work" would be "to hear Spender, Auden, McNeice recited or read at a poetry recital." Am I to infer from this that all poems are judged on oral reading, and that any poem which is unsuitable for being read aloud is automatically labelled "Not Genuine"? If that is so, then I can conceive of no finer poetic achievement than "Humpty-Dumpty" recited by Miss Eunice Rogers with the same degree of emotional intensity as she illustrated a talk on Gerard Manley Hopkins some time ago. (At least Mrs. Roscoe cannot accuse Humpty-Dumpty of lacking "rhythm and simplicity of thought and expression.") And similarly, much of Hopkins' work must be false, also some of the classicists, all of Spender's except for perhaps "The Pylons" and one or two other of his earlier poems, all of Auden's apart from his latest sonnets, and as for McNeice, Dylan Thomas, Charles Madge, Day Lewis, Laura Riding, well . . . the least said about them the better. But I think I have sufficiently indicated the lunatic distortion of values which would take place if, as Mrs. Roscoe seems to suggest, all poetry was judged on the basis of an oral reading.

Most modern poetry, except when written specifically for that purpose, is not intended to be read aloud. It appeals to the intellect, whereas oral poetry should appeal primarily to the emotions and senses. It is childishly illogical that, because the works of a poet reflects an intelligence which is more developed than that of the Humpty-Dumpty school, and are therefore unsuitable for reading aloud, they should be dismissed as "obscure" or "not genuine." (Incidentally, why does Mrs. Roscoe imply that simplicity is concomitant with sincerity? Simplicity is often adopted as the virtue of those who are too weak of intellect or too lazy to try and be other than simple.) And Mrs. Roscoe's letter is not entirely lacking in obscurity. What precisely does she mean by "that real spirit which is the essence of poetry"? Is it that she still believes in a sort of divine inspiration, the form of snobbishness in which effete and pseudo-aesthetic poets cloak the very human qualities which they profess to despise? I cannot help thinking so, as this would also account for her disapproval of modern poetry, being as it is the expression of our "de-bunction" of all such comfortable snobbisms.

But I do not intend to build this letter into another "Defence of Modern Poetry." I believe that modern poetry is its own attack and defence. I believe that its courage and sincerity will stand the test of posterity—the only true test of poetry in general—to become as vital a part of the lives of the people as are politics today. And I am confident that some day—who knows?—even Mrs. Roscoe and her fellow reactionaries will recover from the bucolic pains from which they are suffering today as the result of chewing the cud of hypocritical cliches for so long in the past. But perhaps I am over-optimistic.

In her criticism of Mr. McCullum Smith's poem "Landscape: From a Cycle of Poems for Marguerite," Mrs. Roscoe betrays the

same palpable lack of intelligence as in her suggestion of an excellent test of modern poetry. Although I abhor Mr. Smith's numerous exclamations—" O Love ! O Joy ! " etcetera—I consider that Mrs. Roscoe is entirely unjustified in describing his poem as " involved, obscure, and affected." She would doubtless have understood it better had she troubled to read the appended note.

I was stimulated by Mrs. Roscoe's adverse criticism of my poem " Fata Morgana," as, previous to that, it had received only praise. But I could have wished for a more detailed and clearer criticism. She accuses me of " confusion of metaphor, and over-elaboration." I deny the former accusation, and I defy Mrs. Roscoe to produce the evidence to support it. If, by over-elaboration " she means " to work at with great pains," I admit it. Apart from anything else, a poem is a piece of hard work, or, as the Americans would put it, " job to be done." My " job " in " Fata Morgana " was not only to record the psychological desert of the aesthetic poet living amid beautiful surroundings—(did Mrs. Roscoe read the appended note ?)—on which the realization of slum conditions makes as much of an impression as a mirage on her material counterpart, yet is sufficient to be exaggerated into a sort of divine inspiration of the whole poem ; but also to convey the unbridgeable difference between the reactionary and the progressive elements of poetry as reflecting those same elements in social conditions today. To be completely effective, I had to turn myself inside-out, or rather, upside-down, and wander into words as a reactionary. From the hothouse *sensual* atmosphere of the piling up of m's and s's in soporific rhythm—

" Where mossy-smooth dunes of warmth move, tossing the bream
Bemused "—

the definite metrical pattern, the internal as well as the external rhyme-scheme, I had to intensify into the nude, sincere, jazz-rhythmic, essentially *mental* (yet to " I," lifeless) statement of suffering—" We want bread "—then to surge outward again, the mental overlapping, to the former false mellifluence of diction. Mrs. Roscoe seems to think that I did my " job " too well.

Goodmayes. Yours etc., CON HARVEY.

A PLAIN MAN'S INQUIRIES INTO POETRY

(*To the Editor*, THE POETRY REVIEW.)

Dear Sir,—For over twelve months I have been a reader of THE POETRY REVIEW and would like to write you a few lines on the subject of Poetry from the standpoint of a plain man.

I have read many of the poems in your review with unqualified interest, while some have seemed more like a tangled skein, or a spider's web, but not nearly as beautiful. I have wondered lately if the slump in poetry is due to a slump of intelligent readers, or a slump of poets.

In the current issue of your REVIEW there is a striking article on "New Poetry at Cross Purposes." The following lines arrested my attention:

> "Today, as one young poet states in his preface, England has far more poets than the publishers know what to do with. One is tempted to hint at the debasing of the currency."

Now who can say what constitutes great poetry, or even poetry, and frankly I feel at a loss to understand who decides the qualification of a great poet, or a minor.

From the public library I get many books of poems, and after reading I have often asked myself if a thought, or an idea, may not be expressed in language with no affinity to poetry, and further if inspiration has any connection with poetry, and if so, why it is so often absent. Many times one closes the book with the thought surging through the mind, "this poem is just words, words, words," and wondering if poetry is merely incoherent rhapsody, or only the decoration of an idea, after laborious search for a supposedly fine expression in language, which has no relation to soul emotion.

One would imagine it possible to express with perfect clarity an idea which may have some relation to life, and not bury in earth and moss and rock, what may seem a "jewel," but which may prove to be after all the labour, merely, "paste."

Why should obscurity seem to be the chosen avenue to convey to men's minds some thought of inspired beauty?

Poetry, I feel ought to be pliant in movement and expression, even fragile, so long as beauty in form and emotion are preserved in their purity.

Personally, I incline to the view that the great mass of men and women of poetic minds (but do not write) have lost heart, and almost desire, because it would seem a smoke screen has hidden from their souls the beauty and dignity of poetry. And I feel certain that if the spirit of poetry can be symbolized in human form she must have wept in deep anguish of soul, because she has been bound by chains of restraint from those who would gladly worship at her shrine, especially if it is true that we live by "Admiration, Hope, and Love."

I feel it would be more true to say that some poems would be clearer in meaning if they were written as prose, which may be their correct form. They might even reach a very high standard as prose, but as poetry they fail to quicken the imagination, for men who "Toil and spin" have not the time, nor the inclination, to spend trying to discover something that has been shorn of its spirit.

I look forward with keen interest to THE POETRY REVIEW, as it affords me some hours of happiness as I carefully peruse its pages.

Yours sincerely,

ALBERT H. HODGES.

Berry Brow, Huddersfield.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

Few of the poems submitted since the end of August, whether as general open contributions or in competition for the premium award, show the influence of the war but among the latter are at least two that deserve a share of the premium. Several others were too immediately topical and incidental, more suitable for publication in a newspaper than in a periodical from two to six months after the event dealt with. We miss the anticipatory commemorative poem. No contributor has remembered the important Browning anniversary occurring in December. . . . We miss too on this occasion many overseas contributors and trust they will not assume that the destruction of our peace has affected our continuity. We place on the premium list RACHEL E. BOULTON, (Winscombe); LETTICE HAFFENDEN, (Shermanbury); RADCLIFFE BINNINGTON (Louth); M. LOCKERBIE GOFF (Northampton).

HIGHLY COMMENDED:

Irene Brittain Bell, Stockton;
T. E. Casson, Ulverston;
A. H. Cordwell, Worthing;
N. K. Cruickshank, Sudbury;
Geoffrey Dobbs, London, W.1;
H. Escott, Aberdeen;
I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol;
Christine Henderson, Montreal;
Pauline Huthwaite, Hawksworth;
Dallas Kenmare, Barnt Green;
G. E. Merrick, Warminster;
Redcliffe McKie, Brighton;
E. Curt Peters, Chalfont St. Giles;
Phoebe Rayner, Rivington;
Beresford Richards, Craigavad;
Alan Smith, Kenninghall;
Margery Smith, Nottingham; ;
Brenda F. Skene, London, W
Charles Woodhouse, Haslemere.

COMMENDED:

Elizabeth Barrett, Seaford;
Enid W. Barry, Highgate;
Cloudrider, Budapest;
Alice E. Collinge, Harwood;
O. C. Daigan, London, N.;
Marguerite Edgelow, Gerrard's Cross;
P. Eugénie Emeric, East Sheen;
Reginald C. Eva, Hove;
A. Edward Farmer, London, S.W.;
Jessie B. Heard, Bristol;
J. W. G. Heaven, Ealing;
M. H. Hill, Pangbourne;
Irene H. Lewis, Leatherhead;
Edith Mary Mason, Dovercourt Bay;
C. Morton, Cwmtillery,
Ierne Ormsby, Thurgoland;
Frances Paul, London, S.W.;
T. Pittaway, Frome;
Bertha M. Skeat, Sedbergh;
Hilda N. Slade, Worthing;
Ethel M. Stephenson, Guildford;
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth.

CHRISTINE L. HENDERSON, (MONTREAL) in VANISHED WINGS pays a tribute to Mrs. Earhart: (They have been talking a lot about Amelia "on this side" this year. I knew her slightly, and great was my grief when she *vanished*.)

Not in any airport of the world
Will she be seen again ;
Not by any of the four winds
Will her plane be whirled
Within our ken ;
Not where the riderless horses of the sea
Are plunging and rearing,—
Not where the taut storm-winds in glee
Are jeering and veering.

As the migrant Arctic Tern fares forth
And from pole to pole goes flying,
So Amelia ventured the South and North,
And blazed the trail a-dying !

But wherever the glint of the wild seamew
Whitens against the wave,—
Wherever the broad Pacific's blue
Recalls her nameless grave,
Whenever a hero's deeds are told
O'er any ether or foam,
Amelia Earhart's spirit bold
Will find her fame and home !

P. E. C. Duce continues the recent personal discussion in verse with : The Poet to Himself :

The cold companion of your little time
Walks with you always, and the whole day long
Your thoughts must be of him, and all your song
Be of his praise : yet as you strive to climb
The platform of Life's tragic pantomime
To take your part in that fantastic throng,
Is it not he who sets your footsteps wrong
And leads you stumbling through the broken rhyme ?

The scornful wit that hides the coward heart,
The ready tongue that marks the Pharisee,
The mind that idly wastes the drifting days,
Are all he offers you in your small part :
And still you trust him knowing yours will be
The empty triumph and the worthless praise.

Nancy Pollok, who recently left Glasgow for Chile, describes life In South America :

This is a land of lotus, here the soul,
Drugged by eternal sunlight, languishes

In careless indolence;
Here the soft-falling seed
Comes with no effort into flower again,
And winter scarce
Can hold one bitter banquet on the brown
And sunbaked earth.
Here are no storms, no cool austerity.
No frozen midnights hung
With steely stars,
No mighty winds to shake the beleaguered heart
Out of its poor complacency, few rains
To wash away the stain of ease.
Here effort
Seems utter folly and time
Meaningless,
And to sleep in the sun
Is man's one wisdom.

Exiled soul, beware!
Born of the strenuous north,
You are in danger now, death threatens you
In every drowsy hour—
Get you again
To your pale shies, your misty, folded hills,
Your meadows, where,
For the green luxury of summer, man
Must pay in months
Of merciless wind and rain.
Here in this sultry land you cannot live,
Soul from the north,
The sun will burn you out, you will be stifled
And parched, crying for succour, crying
For air and water—
Only your own wild winters
Can bring you to a rich maturity
Of leaf and bud and flower.

VERA ARLETT visits NEW PLACE:
I was there, then;
I stood in the garden, and watched the Stratford man,
Who was sitting under a tree, writing his last play.
Somehow, I knew it was his last, and he near death . . .
—Or a new life, whichever word you choose.
"What is it all about," I said at last,
"The drama that God made, with Man for hero,
And the round world for mise-en-scène?"

The Stratford man looked up, and smiled at me,
And the light in his eyes was strangely beautiful;
He seemed at peace.
But he laid a finger on his lips, and whispered "Hush!
These things are seen and known and they come in dreams,
But they are not spoken of." Then he went on writing,
And a leaf dropped from the tree that he had planted,
And a flight of birds wheeled, and turned homeward
To the tall trees about the Church.

E. E. SPEIGHT (Ostacamund) defines POETRY:

Wisdom is not of the schools: what enters there
Is but the husk of learning; poetry
Holdeth aloof, hallows the intervals
Of our self-anchored groping, lifts our eyes
To the waning of the moon, the planets' rise
Within the heart, the way the sunfire falls,
Transfiguring abasement. Everywhere
Poetry abideth, one with prayer
And tenderness, and the intensity
Of quivering rapture. Poetry is the world
Our hearts forget, the sciences that hold
The music of creation.

EDITHA MELBOURNE (Maidstone) deals faithfully with THE CRITICS

Aloof they sit
In their olympias in the city,
August and inaccessible,
Casually scanning the neat piles before them—
The printed book,
The neatly-typed manuscript,
And the hand-written foolscap pages,
Foredoomed to the waste-paper basket,
But all outpourings of some ardent spirit
Craving for self-expression
That finds relief in prose or verse,
Or perchance touched with the divine fire
So casual in its choice of domicile
And negligent of class or pedigree.—
Then, with a sigh,
Settling down to the task
Of reviewing those works that take their fancy.

The author's name—
Well, that's the first consideration,
His standing in the literary world,
(For one must not offend the greater Powers-that-be)

A quick turning of pages and the fate
Of many a script is sealed.

High-sounding words and involved phrases
Incomprehensible even to themselves,
Jargon of grooved minds,
Shattering blasts of destructive criticism
Or wordy pæans of praise
Intensely satisfying to the writers,
Basking in the adulation of the few
To whom they give their weighty approbation,
And those unseen admirers who worship from afar,—
Their readers.
A gloomy thicket
Of tangled thorns and flourishing undergrowth,
Sunless and impenetrable,
With never a pathway for the eager feet
Of the traveller to follow,
Only a formidable mass of inconsequential confusion . . .
So easy it is to criticise,
So hard to understand.

Then for the general exodus
By the five o'clock train
To the gentilities of suburbia
Or some new colony
Where they can relax
By assuming another form of conventionality.

KUNIGUNDE DUNCAN suggests that DIRGES ARE FOR THE DEAD :

Marshal such dirges as you must,
Marshal all words you can make—
But you'll never quell the quest of the heart,
Nor the sunrise sheen on the lake.

For, should the quest be cancelled quite,
Life would dissolve into air :
It's the *why*, alone, that makes life, life
And ventures everywhere
To knock upon the door of time,
To seek the portentous cell,
And to pattern the word and the thing unheard
Into one answering rhyme.

Marshal such dirges as you must,
Or with blind, red words stitch a hood—

But you'll never hush the *why* in the heart
Or the bird-song in the wood.

KATHARINE SHEPARD HAYDEN (Madison, Wisconsin) addresses A SONNET TO KEATS, MOZART, AND SCHUBERT, in remembrance of the *Ode to a Nightingale:*

This poet died too young and with him, these
Who followed Orpheus. Down in early death
Sank their great spirits. Hollow-eyed disease,
Comfortless poverty, destroyed their breath,
Froze the warm motions of their gallant hearts,
And stopped the lightning movements of their minds!
Yet would I not have chosen (in the marts
Of their own day) to take the crusts and rinds
Flung to them there, to meet their human need;
To bear the hunger, the despair, the same
Dark fate, just to have been the deathless reed
For such a music, wick for such a flame!—
Just to have wrought one ode, that day beneath
The garden plum-tree there by Hampstead Heath!

* * * *

We regret to have to record the sudden death on the day our appreciation of his *Aliunde* was published of Sir Alexander Lawrence, Bart., who as a vice-president had developed an affectionate interest in THE POETRY SOCIETY. Prominently associated with the law, he found recreation in poetry. Addressing a recent meeting of the Kensington Centre, he described how during the last war he read and studied Chaucer assiduously, and became intimate with the geography as well as the personages of the Tales, many of which he was still able to repeat verbatim. Sir Alexander's strong attachment to Italy was weakened by recent political developments and he strongly advised the postponement of the Browning commemoration meeting in Venice at which he had undertaken to speak and also to receive visiting members in Browning's villa in Asolo, where *Asolando* was written, which he rented from the daughter of Mrs. Bronson.

Following a moving recognition of Sir Alexander's scholarship, versatility and friendliness at the October meeting of the Council of The Poetry Society, Mr. W. Marshall supplies this pointed memorial epigram:

Our classic friend who turned the verse,
That ancient bards created,
Into our tongue—delightful, terse—
Now is himself translated.

The usual premium offer is continued—see page 509 closing date, December 1st.

To Members of The Poetry Society (Incorporated)

It is earnestly hoped that members will renew their subscription when due and that any arrears will be paid promptly, thereby reducing office work and expense. It is gratifying to be able to report that since the beginning of war several members have voluntarily doubled their subscriptions or added donations to the new establishment fund. The duty of maintaining and strengthening this unique organization is incumbent on all associated with it. At this juncture there is more need than ever before for the continued existence of what has become a national and international institution. During the last war the meetings and services of the Society became more and more in demand, poetry, as *The Times* pointed out, assuming its ancient place again as the inspirer and consoler of suffering humanity.

It is hoped that special and centre meetings will be continued and extended to meet whatever needs may arise but merely passive association will be of value in constituting and extending this desirable poetry lovers fellowship.

The examinations in diction and verse speaking, which have exercised a definite and invaluable formative influence for thirty years, will be continued in London and the provinces as required, and the various gold medal competitions will be held as usual.

As during the last war, THE POETRY REVIEW, now in its thirty-first year, will be continued as the one essential, indispensable, catholic periodical concerned with poetry.

* * * *

ELIZABETH VIRGINIA RAPLEE, Broadway, New York, sending on September 15th her membership subscription for a fifth year, with hearty appreciation and good wishes, added: The spiritual sustenance we receive from such magazines as THE POETRY REVIEW is of inestimable value in these times, and I cannot speak too highly of the splendid work for poetry being done by the REVIEW. May it long continue to give us the best in poetry and criticism! From the heart I send greetings to fellow poets and poetry lovers on your side of the water, and to all engaged in the great tasks of these days.

At a well-attended meeting of the Nova Scotia Centre of The Poetry Society on August 25th, the members wished the President, Mrs. G. A. Mackintosh, to express their sympathy and concern during these trying days, for those in the Mother Country. "We will be one with you in our hope and prayer that peace may be preserved."

B. M. G. Young, N.W.11: THE POETRY REVIEW has a great task to fulfil during wartime.

A. Edward Farmer considers "it astonishing to realize that work of such a high standard as published by THE POETRY REVIEW is being continuously produced. But then, Elizabethan (i.e. Tudor) days were almost as collectively dangerous as our own."

An inmate of Mayday Hospital, Thornton Heath, writes: I have been a reader of THE POETRY REVIEW for eight years (since 18) and have looked forward eagerly to the new issues, but being in my bed for two months it has been really necessary, and my sole companion. Midst a crowd of present-day periodicals it shines likes a star, and its exceedingly enjoyable contents are as constant.

I enclose my subscription to the Poetry Society, with best wishes for its continuance as a source of inspiration in these difficult times! DORIS MAJOR (Hendon).

I do hope the Review will not have to be abbreviated in any way. It is one of life's few consolations at present. With every good wish for the future.—EDITH P. SMITH (Newark).

THE POETRY REVIEW, I hope and pray, will still continue to function in these tragic times. Intellectual starvation is surely as much to be dreaded as a shortage of material rations.—MARGUERITE JOHANSEN (Swindon).

I enclose my annual subscription to The Poetry Society. As a "Government evacuee" with my school, I simply can't afford *not* to have THE POETRY REVIEW. Incidentally, our country surroundings have already produced a batch of quite tolerable verse from our town children.—D. M. WILSON.

A Weston-super-Mare member states: "I have much pleasure in renewing my subscription to The Poetry Society. In these difficult days it is more than ever necessary to hold fast to the things which endure. There can surely be no better way of keeping alive the spirit of our nation than by banding ourselves together in appreciation of our common heritage of poetry."

John Youle, of Ipswich, writes: On reading THE POETRY REVIEW for May–June 1939, two things struck me as remarkable—1. The pessimism of some of the poems, e.g., "A Poet's Creed," "The World the Moon Creates," "The Grey Monkey." 2. The article on Amphibrachic or Flick-Stroke-Flick Verse, and specially its rarity, and further rarity of perfect lines when attempted.

The Derbyshire Advertiser, to which we are indebted for many admirable and discriminating notices of THE POETRY REVIEW, commenting on MacCallum Smith's attempt to define poetry in the July issue, says, In our opinion poetry may be defined as the translation of vision into beautiful musical words; the vision of those to whom "the primrose by the river's brim" is something more. The poet "sings because he must," he is inspired and whence comes that inspiration?